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THE

REPENTANCE OF NINEVEH,

A METRICAL HOMILY ON THE MISSION OF JONAH,

BY

EPHRAEM SYRUS.

ALSO,

AN EXHORTATION TO REPENTANCE, AND SOME SMALLER PIECES.

Translated from the original Syriac,

WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES,

BY

THE REV. HENRY BURGESS, PH.D.,

OF GÖTTINGEN, CURATE OF ST. MARY'S, BLACKBURN, AND TRANSLATOR OF "SELECT METRICAL HYMNS AND HOMILIES OF EPHRAEM SYRUS."

ܢܝܢܘܐ ܐܬܒܙܙܬ ܡܢ ܗܘ ܢܚܘܣ ܠܟ

"Nineveh hath been spoiled: Who will grieve for thee?"

Nahum iii. 7.

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TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCE ALBERT,

The Patron,

TO AUSTEN H. LAYARD, ESQ., D.C.L.,

AND TO THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY

FOR EXPLORING THE

RUINS OF ASSYRIA AND BABYLON;

WITH THE CONVICTION THAT THEIR LABOURS

WILL TEND TO CONFIRM

THE TRUTH OF DIVINE REVELATION,

This Volume

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.

29145

"EPHRAEM, THE MENTAL EUPHRATES OF THE CHURCH, FROM WHOM THE WHOLE COMPANY OF BELIEVERS BEING WATERED, THEY PRODUCE A HUNDRED-FOLD THE FRUIT OF FAITH.—EPHRAEM, THAT FERTILE VINE OF GOD, PUTTING FORTH THE FRUITS OF THE SWEET CLUSTERS OF DOCTRINE, AND REJOICING THE CHILDREN OF THE CHURCH WITH THE FULNESS OF DIVINE LOVE."

GREGORIUS NYSSENUS.

CONTENTS.

PAGE

DEDICATION iii

PREFACE xi

INTRODUCTION :—

I. On the probable Origin and Intention of the "REPENTANCE OF NINEVEH;" II. On its literary characteristics xix

The Repentance of Nineveh.

PROŒMIUM 1

PART THE FIRST.

Jonah preaches in Nineveh.—His testimony is received and credited.—The effects on public morals.—Jonah compared to a faithful physician.—The king sets an example of repentance, and his subjects follow 6

PART THE SECOND.

The terror and lamentation of children and young persons caused by the message of Jonah.—Their parents try to comfort them.—They act as Abraham did when soothing the fears of Isaac.—They hold out hope to their little ones but cannot themselves entertain it 16

PART THE THIRD.

PAGE

The king comes forth to the people weeping and clothed with sackcloth.—A description of the misery of the city.—The king addresses his armies and gives them his counsel.—He refers to God's government of the world, that He is merciful as well as just, and suggests repentance.—He illustrates his advice by the case of the flood in the days of Noah.—A description of that event 28

PART THE FOURTH.

The king relates his interview with Jonah, his contempt both of threatenings and promises.—He compares the prophet to a faithful physician who prescribes painful remedies, and contrasts him with those who predict good things for the sake of gain.—He suggests fasting and prayer.—He refers to the temptation of Job by Satan, and exhorts to a general and entire humiliation..... 40

PART THE FIFTH.

The king sets the example, the people follow, and put on sackcloth.—He sends to his subjects, and himself goes through the city urging all to repentance.—Jonah is filled with wonder, and contrasts the reformation of the Ninevites with the impenitence of his own people.—Divine grace taught Nineveh that by fasting the threatened doom might be averted 55

PART THE SIXTH.

Jonah contemplates from a distance the altered state of Nineveh.—He compares its repentant inhabitants with the rebellious and obdurate Israelites.—The crimes of Israel are enumerated.—The predicted day at length arrives.—The fears of all classes are described.—Preternatural portents indicate the coming doom..... 72

PART THE SEVENTH.

PAGE

The day predicted by Jonah passes, and Nineveh is not overthrown.—Jonah is disappointed, the Ninevites begin to hope.—They give thanks to God, expostulate with Jonah, and invite him to rejoice with them.—They flock to his bower, and hear the conversation between him and God.. 86

PART THE EIGHTH.

The Ninevites praise God for pleading their cause.—Jonah ceases from his vexation.—He is carried in triumph by the people, who load him with presents which they had vowed in their trouble.—Jonah's humiliation in the fish and his honour among the Ninevites are contrasted.—The king orders him to be conducted home in royal state.—The nations he passes through treat him with reverence.. 98

PART THE NINTH.

The Ninevites accompany Jonah to the borders of his own country.—They wish to enter it and to conduct the prophet home.—Jonah, fearful lest they should witness the iniquities of the Israelites, endeavours to divert them from their purpose.—His anxiety on this subject described.—He is guilty of falsehood and deceit.—The Ninevites yield, but having parted from Jonah they ascend a hill to get a distant view of the land 106

PART THE TENTH.

From the top of the hill the Ninevites behold the abominations of the Israelites.—They see the calves of Jeroboam, numerous idolatrous altars, and the licentiousness of the worshippers.—All seem given up to Satan.—They are horrified at the sight.—Their conversation on the subject 118

PART THE ELEVENTH.

PAGE

Having seen the wickedness of the Israelites, the Ninevites resolve to return to their own country.—While honouring Jonah, they condemn his countrymen, who boast themselves of their relation to Abraham, while they are idolaters.—They sing a song of praise to God, and call upon all classes of the people to join them 132

THE CONCLUSION.

Ephraem compares the repentance of the Ninevites with that of his hearers, and concludes by blessing God 141

An Exhortation to Repentance.

PART THE FIRST.

The great value of repentance illustrated by the cases of the rich man and Lazarus and the wise and foolish virgins.—The repentant are encouraged to apply to Christ by the numerous examples of those who sinned, and yet were saved by faith.—Christ compared to a physician, and the penitent to a sick man 147

PART THE SECOND.

The snares of Satan are deprecated.—The victories of David referred to.—He conquered the lion and the bear, but was overcome by temptation.—His repentance an encouragement to others.—Christ is a sure physician.—His promises are quoted.—The soul would imitate David's repentance and faith, that it may employ his language of praise 158

PART THE THIRD.

PAGE

God's mercy is to be greatly magnified.—The words of Christ, like those of a physician, comfort the penitent.—Repentance should lead to stedfast reformation.—The Christian should labour for an incorruptible crown, as men do for one which is corruptible 170

PART THE FOURTH.

The freedom of man's will to repent or continue in sin.—God's appeals to that effect by the prophets.—There is joy in heaven over penitent sinners.—God has abundantly done his part.—From all its evils and dangers the soul flees for refuge to the cross of Christ..... 178

A Prayer of the Penitent 185

An Evening Prayer 188

Renunciation of the World..... 193

INDICES:—

I. Of Syriac words illustrated; II. Of Texts of Scripture; III. Of Subjects..... 201

"To my faint and sickly soul,
Which bitter troubles have afflicted,
Come, Thou mighty One of renown;
Expel them, and I shall be at rest.
O Lord, I am a field of thorns,
Even of sins of long standing;
O holy Husbandman,
Root out the tares from Thy ground.
Satan hath bound me with his yoke,
That I may work for him in servitude;
O my kind and lawful Master,
Free me, that I may be indeed Thine own!"

Parœnetica, Tom. vi., p. 398.

PREFACE.

It is with no ordinary satisfaction that I now present to English readers a second volume of translations from Ephraem Syrus. The approbation bestowed on the *Hymns and Homilies* by the almost consentient voice of the Subscribers to the work, was sufficient encouragement to me to incur the great labour of compiling a similar volume. The admiration expressed of the piety and genius of Ephraem, as discerned amidst all the disadvantages of a translation, proceeded from the highest class of minds, and strikingly confirmed the opinion I had myself formed from the independent study of my author. I believe that the longer and more elaborate pieces which I now present to my readers will deepen the impressions produced by Ephraem's minor productions.

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PAGE

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Ephraem belongs. While acknowledged by all sensible persons to be of inestimable value, the writings of the fathers have been thought to be destitute of attractions for general readers, and they have been used more as defences and illustrations of divine truth than as having an interest as readable productions. This opinion is partly erroneous, for how much that is eloquent and beautiful is found in the early apologists and homilists and commentators of the Church! But it is also partly true; for the fathers are generally treated rather as part of the literary apparatus of the learned than as intended for common readers, and a large portion of their productions really have a very recondite character. Athanasius's treatises against the Arians are full of instructive matter, but never can become popular; and the same remark may be made respecting a very large proportion of the writings of the fathers. Much might still be done to render many of their pieces acceptable to English readers; but with regard to the bulk of them, such a result would be impossible. They will remain monuments of sanctified genius, and supply important materials for Church history and casuistical divinity, but cannot enter very considerably into the ordinary literature of the people.

But the case is quite different with the greater part of the writings of Ephraem Syrus. They were originally composed *ad populum*, and have those qualities which fit them to be read with pleasure by Christian people of every age and condition. They are mostly *poems*, possessing great variety of outward form, much spirit and fancy in their

style, and of general interest in the topics they treat of. They come home to the heart by their recognition of the events of every-day life, and by their constant reference to the joys and sorrows which are identified with our humanity. Many of them indeed are polemical, but even those abound with the literary qualities which can make controversy pleasing. But the greater part are meditative and hortatory, sounding the depths of human passions, both in their storms and conflicts and in their seasons of tranquillity and calm. Over the whole there is spread the air of an unaffected piety, caught from the divine models of the Holy Scriptures, and from intimate and daily communion with God. We are much mistaken in our estimate of human nature, if the contents of these two volumes are not found to vibrate in unison with some of the most concealed and delicate chords of the heart.

My first design extended no further than the translation of the *Repentance of Nineveh*, but finding it of less extent than I had calculated upon, I added the *Exhortation to Repentance*, as being a kindred subject, though treated in an entirely different style. I am glad that this opportunity was furnished me of giving a specimen of Ephraem's meditative and pathetic manner, as exhibited in the last named Homily. In the former volume the pieces are short, and do not test the capacity of the writer for sustained and lengthy composition. The *Repentance of Nineveh* is a narrative wrought up with an evident reference to effect, as addressed to a popular

audience, and proves how exhaustless were the stores of imagination which the Deacon of Edessa possessed at his command. But the *Exhortation to Repentance* is humble, plaintive, and subdued; more like the utterance of the writer's own heart before God than an artistic attempt to move others. In *Nineveh*, we see Ephraem as the eloquent orator carrying with him his audience, like Isaiah or Ezekiel; in the *Exhortation*, he comes before us more in the spirit of Jeremiah when he wrote his "Lamentations." The smaller pieces possess nothing different from those inserted in the *Hymns and Homilies*, to which they may be considered as supplemental.

My execution of this volume has deepened the conviction I before felt, that Ephraem can only have justice done to him by the metrical form of his writings being recognized, in any version which may be given of them. It is true I have not attempted to retain his metre, but have been satisfied with a free rhythm, yet even this is sufficient to convey a far better idea of the original, than a purely prosaic arrangement of his sentiments could possibly do. In almost all cases the matter is given line for line as it exists in the original; the unavoidable exceptions to this rule being too few to merit notice. This gives the reader a good idea of the force, the brevity, and the elliptical character of the heptasyllabic verses which Ephraem employed. I hope indeed, notwithstanding every drawback rendered inevitable by my translation, that I have succeeded in giving, in the two volumes, a life-like representation of the principal characteristics of

Ephraem, and of that metrical literature which must have formed so potent an instrument for instructing the Church, in the age and country in which he lived. My task has been one of great interest to myself, and the pleasure I have found in reading my author has enabled me, I hope, to catch some of his spirit, and transfuse it into the language in which I have clothed his thoughts.

I have found, even more than in the former volume, how great are the philological stores awaiting arrangement in this vast magazine of Syriac learning. The number of words, or modifications of meanings, which I have marked and catalogued as being at present unrepresented in existing Lexicons, represent only a part of this material, so abundant in its resources as developing the wealth of the language. My hand was continually held back from annotation by the recollection that I intended my volume, in a great measure, for English readers, otherwise the notes would have been far more extensive than they now are. Grammatical forms not yet chronicled abound in the pieces now translated, and we have a pleasing conviction that a language which has been described as rugged and barren has its delicate beauties as well as its hoary sublimities. At a distance indeed, we see nothing but the mountain tops and the craggy steeps destitute of verdure; but a nearer acquaintance with the country brings us into familiarity with fertile and variegated regions, and even with little sunny spots enamelled with the choicest flowers.

A wish has been expressed to me by some whose opi-

nions I highly respect, that I had accompanied both volumes with such a portion of commentary as would point out what I might consider Ephraem's departures from scriptural truth. I have glanced at this subject in the former volume,[a] and can only say that my judgment is decidedly in favour of allowing each reader to form his own opinion on the points alluded to. I am far from being satisfied that the free utterance of my own opinions, upon matters of a doubtful complexion, would give satisfaction to those who have wished to have them. While it can be easily gathered by an attentive reader of these volumes that I am not disposed to yield implicit credence to patristic tradition, I must at the same time confess, that I think the historical development of the Gospel revelation is too often ignored and undervalued, from the fear of certain evils which attended the Church of the first ages, as they have, more or less, accompanied it in every century of its existence. My object, besides, has been a literary one, although having sacred themes for its basis; and I have felt that I could not, with propriety, ask for aid in publishing the writings of Ephraem, while making them the vehicle for any peculiar views of my own.

I have received a few suggestions from friends respecting the former volume, but they are not of sufficient importance to demand more than this general recognition and acknowledgment. An error has, however, been dis-

a See *Hymns and Homilies*, Preface, p. xvi.

covered by myself, which my sense of the value of truth will not allow me to conceal, though it is very probable that without my own confession it might never have been discovered, unless indeed the Syriac of Ephraem shall receive a larger portion of studious attention than it is likely to meet with at present. I allude to the expression, *Son of the kingdom*, as applied to Jesus Christ, in the first and seventh Hymns of the *Select Metrical Hymns and Homilies*. In each case the phrase should be, *Son of a*, or *the King;* and I beg the possessors of the volume to make the necessary correction in the text, the notes, and the Index, in the places thus indicated.

This mistake is one of pure oversight, since the words confounded together are most elementary and of constant occurrence. I saw the error the moment I cast my eye on the Syriac text, after the work was published. That it should be committed twice will not appear very remarkable to those who know the influence of a tenacious memory upon mental associations. The word was read *kingdom* in the first instance, from a somewhat dingy page on a winter's day, and the memory, more than the eye, afterwards perpetuated the mistake. Had I read the Latin translation, I should have been set right at once, but its paraphrastic character has prevented its being consulted by me so much as might have been expected. I have noticed many expressions, which, as a matter of taste, I should perhaps alter in a second edition, but this is the only *erratum* of which I am conscious, and, from principle, I feel bound to point it out to my readers.

I now take my leave of the very numerous patrons by whose generous assistance these volumes have been completed; and, while thanking them for their kindness, would express a hope that they may find personal gratification in these results of my labours, and also be the instruments of calling more attention to the great claims of Syriac literature.

HENRY BURGESS.

Blackburn, Nov. 24, 1853.

INTRODUCTION.

THE *Repentance of Nineveh*, now first presented in an English dress, is printed in the original Syriac in the Roman edition of the works of Ephraem, published by the learned Asseman.[a] At the end of the *Commentary on the Old Testament*, written in prose, there are found some metrical homilies, with the title, *In selecta divinæ Scripturæ loca Sermones Exegetici* (Exegetical Discourses on select passages of Holy Scripture), of which this is the longest and most important. They are twelve in number, although by an error, only eleven are mentioned in the index. Each one has a text of Scripture as its theme, of which a free and practical exposition is given. In the *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, Asseman catalogues thirty-one of these homilies, the whole of which are hepta-

a Doubts have been expressed as to the propriety of spelling this name without the final *i*, as it is often written in English books. If the name is *Arabic*, the final *i* would be inseparable from it; but we consider it as an Italian name, and Anglicize it accordingly.

syllabic; but only twelve are found here, the others being distributed under various heads in the collected works. In this catalogue, the homily now translated is marked as *the third*, with only this short notice: "Concerning the prophet Jonah and the Ninevites;" the two first verses being added, as is customary with Asseman. There is therefore nothing to call special attention to this piece, and it was only by an inspection of the whole collection, as printed in the Roman edition, that we became aware of its great claims upon our attention.

Asseman mentions fifty-one hymns, *De Virginitate*, of which the forty-first and eight following are said to be *concerning Jonah and the Ninevites*. "These," says Asseman *(Bibliotheca Orientalis*, tom. i., p. 98), "are different from that which begins, 'Behold, Jonah preached in Nineveh.'" He gives the first verse, "*I flee for refuge to Thy mercy;*" from which we may presume these hymns were more devotional than historical. We can find nothing like them in the printed works. Asseman then comments on a passage in one of them in the following manner:—"The Marcionists affirmed that it was lawful to baptize a Christian man twice; St. Ephraem here refutes the error by teaching that sins committed after baptism required the remedy of repentance. He says, 'Because men should not be baptized again, they should not sin again. But since there is defilement, there is also a cleansing. He who gave hope in baptism will not cut it off;—He gives forgiveness.'" We have translated from the Syriac and not from Asseman's Latin, for the obvious

reason, that the latter is not trustworthy. The sentiment of Ephraem is simple enough, and quite scriptural, but Asseman gives it a turn purely papistical by as gross an abuse of words as perhaps was ever perpetrated in controversy. Ephraem says that God *gives forgiveness* ܚܘܒܐ, a word of constant occurrence, and concerning which there can be no difference of opinion. Yet Asseman renders the sentence, "*Indulgentiam adjecit*, id est, *Clavium potestatem*,—He adds indulgence, that is, the power of the keys!" This specimen of infidelity will justify the animadversions we have often felt it our duty to make on the Latin translation of Ephraem, and shew how impossible it is to get at his real opinions by any Roman Catholic medium.

These nine homilies are evidently altogether different in character from *The Repentance of Nineveh*, for it is remarkable that in this composition Ephraem never alludes to purely Christian matters, but confines himself rigidly to the measure of knowledge possessed under the Old Testament in the days of Jonah. While, therefore, we should have been glad to have been able to consult them, we have no reason to believe that much light would be derived from them to our present task. The mission of Jonah and its results is a very common topic in the Syrian Church, and forms a part of their liturgical services. Thus we are informed by Mr. Badger (*The Nestorians and their Rituals*, vol. i., p. 78), that a piece called *Baootha d' Ninwayé (The Supplication of Nineveh)* still enters into the service of the Nestorians.

We expected to derive great advantages in the prosecution of our task from the *Commentary on Jonah*, which is mentioned in the catalogue of Asseman as existing in Syriac. Having seen the minor prophets in the printed works, we took it for granted that Jonah would be there, especially as it receives rather a lengthy notice in the *Bibliotheca*. We had found Ephraem's expositions of great use in other cases, and felt sure that his homily must receive great illustration from his calm and prosaic exegesis of the scriptural account of Jonah. We confess we were deeply disappointed, when, on turning to the *Commentary on the Prophets*, Jonah was not to be found. As Asseman gives extracts from the MS., which, for some unstated reason, has not been printed, we will, as far as possible, make up for the loss by translating what is there furnished. *(Bibliotheca Orientalis*, tom. i., p. 70.)

"Jonah," says Ephraem, "sprung from the city of Naharin, and when he returned from Nineveh, he retired with his mother to Tyre. 'For by doing this,' he said, 'I shall not be exposed to the derision of men, who taunt me with my false prophecy concerning the destruction of Nineveh.'" Asseman adds, that this account is also given by Epiphanius. On the text, "*Nineveh was a great city of three days' journey*," Ephraem thus comments: "The three days' journey does not allude to the length of the city, but to the fact that in that time the preaching of Jonah had pervaded the whole of it. On the first day it reached the ears of the people; on the second, the nobles; and the third, the king and all his servants." The same view,

says Asseman, is given, as derived from Ephraem, by Gregory Bar Hebræus in his *Horreum Mysteriorum.* On the passage, "*within forty days Nineveh shall be overthrown,*" Ephraem has these observations on the Hebrew text and the version of the Seventy:—

"Jonah began to enter into Nineveh, a journey of three days, and he preached and said, *Within, or yet,* FORTY DAYS, *and Nineveh shall be overthrown.* The Greek reads, *There are yet* THREE DAYS, *and Nineveh shall be overthrown.* Now both of these is true; for it is written in the Hebrew copies thus,—*Jonah began to enter into the city in forty days.* It must be perceived that it was not possible the city should be of forty days' journey, neither that Jonah should remain there forty days, until he saw what would happen to the city. Had such been the case, where would Jonah have made his home? Besides, when the heat of the sun smote upon the head of Jonah, it is written, that a gourd came up over his head, to form a shade for him. But if this gourd remained for forty days to keep the heat of the sun from Jonah, why do we read in the same text, *that it came up in a night and perished in a night?* The Seventy therefore rightly render, *Within* three days *and Nineveh shall be overturned;* reckoning the *forty days* from the time Jonah escaped from the belly of the fish, and took his journey towards Nineveh; but the *three days* they expound of his preaching in that city, declaring that that was the time allotted to the Ninevites for repentance. Thus both statements are true; there

were forty days of travel, and three days of Jonah's preaching and of God's forbearance."

"From this passage," proceeds Asseman, "we learn that Ephraem was not ignorant of the Greek language, for he mentions the version of the Seventy; or at least, that he had read that translation turned into Syriac. [Two entirely different things, by the way.] As to what he says of the Hebrew text, I suspect that he either used a very incorrect copy, or that, by the carelessness of the transcriber, the words *forty days* were joined to the entering of Jonah into Nineveh. For in the Hebrew text it reads thus: *And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.* See Ribera on this place, who thinks the difficulty scarcely soluble. Augustine thinks that the Hebrew reading is to be followed."[b]

This is a remarkable passage on many accounts, and it will strike the reader of the *Repentance of Nineveh* as extraordinary, that if such were the view of Ephraem as to the term of *three* days, he should so constantly presume on the longer period being the correct one, in this composition. We cannot stay to reconcile these discrepancies, but will leave them for future meditation. Let the reader however compare the extract just given by Asseman from

b Augustine discusses this remarkable discrepancy between the Hebrew text and the Septuagint, from which no various readings relieve us, in his work, *De Civitate Dei*, lib. xviii., cap. 44. See also the note of Coquæus, on the passage. The *Codex Syriaco-Hexaplaris* reads *three days*.

the *Commentary on Jonah*, with the following passage and its connection, on page 44 of this volume:—

> "It hath been reported to us by the Hebrews,
> Respecting Moses and Elias,
> That they fasted from food
> Each of them forty days.
> But will this Hebrew prophet
> Thus fast, as long as they did?"

It may be asked, how it was possible for Ephraem thus to weave the idea of forty days so intimately into his narrative, if he possessed so strong a conviction that three days was the appointed time? One thing is quite clear, that the Syrians generally entertained the view conveyed by the Hebrew received text, or Ephraem would not have constructed his homily so exclusively on the presumption that Nineveh was allowed a probation of forty days.

There is a Latin translation of this piece executed by Vossius from a Greek version, and it is printed in the third volume of the Roman edition of the works of Ephraem, p. 561. The conclusion of it, not found in the Syriac original, is given on p. 143 of this work. Asseman says of it: "This is edited by Vossius, from Greek copies, as is plain from the various readings in the margin. We have not access to the Greek version, but it is the same discourse as we have published in vol. ii. in Syriac. By that the good faith of Vossius is confirmed. How much the Greek translator wandered from the Syriac may be seen by any one comparing them." It is curious to collate this Latin version, made from a Greek one, with the original Syriac; in most cases, the differences are fewer

than might be expected. Large portions are omitted. If any exact revision of the Syriac text were needed, valuable aid might in some cases be afforded by this version.

Having thus stated all we are able to produce regarding the text of the *Repentance of Nineveh*, we propose to consider the homily under the following heads. We shall first inquire what was the probable origin and intention of this production of Ephraem, and then give an estimate of its literary characteristics.

I. On the probable Origin and Intention of the "Repentance of Nineveh."

There is abundant proof that the metrical homilies of Ephraem were composed for popular audiences. At a period of the history of the world when books were produced by a slow and expensive process, there is *à priori* evidence of this, which receives confirmation from the pieces themselves. Their metrical form is indeed an *argumentum ad populum*, an evident expedient to catch the ear and assist the memory. Then there are direct appeals to a listening auditory, found everywhere in these writings, presenting Ephraem to us as sustaining the relation of a careful pastor to an attentive and admiring flock.

In our former volume, we have brought forward all that can be gleaned from history which is illustrative of this subject. Ephraem found the metrical capabilities of his native tongue had been successfully used for the propaga-

tion of false doctrine, and that, in union with the charms of music, Bardesanes and Harmonius had made it a powerful instrument for moulding the popular mind. He enlisted these agencies on the side of truth, and soon excelled his predecessors in the arts he borrowed from them. There is a very remarkable passage in his testament, or last will, which shews how zealously he had given himself to this work, and how strong was his conviction that he was divinely called to execute it. This production, in heptasyllabics, is contained in the second volume of the Roman edition of his works, among the Greek translations. It is necessary to mention this, because we searched in vain for it in the three folios of Syriac works, and only met with it by accident in the volumes appropriated to the Greek versions. The extract is from p. 40 :—

"When I was but a little child,
Yet reposing on my mother's breast,
I saw as it were in a vision,
What turned out to be truth;
A vine sprung forth from my tongue,
Which grew and touched the heaven;
It produced fruit without measure,
And branches also innumerable;
The people gathered from it without stint,
Yet its clusters became more abundant.

"These bunches of fruit were Hymns,
And these branches were Homilies;
God was the bestower of them,
Glory be to Him for His goodness!
He gave to me according to His pleasure,
From the house of His treasures."

With this simple piece of autobiography, all the known

circumstances of the life of Ephraem perfectly agree. He was a monk, but not a solitary one; he had renounced some human ties, but only to link himself in closer union with mankind. He might live in a cell, but it was the centre of holy influences, going forth from day to day through a long life, to bless a populous country, whose inhabitants acknowledged his ministerial control. Some men of the same ecclesiastical grade with him, have composed treatises for the learned few, and chosen posterity for their audience; but it was not so with Ephraem. It was the people whom he knew, his disciples and the great body of his fellow-citizens, who stretched out their hands to pluck the grapes of that fruitful vine, and pressed around to drink in with their ears the hymns and homilies of his lips.

The fact then is generally established, that Ephraem's poetical pieces were written for popular audiences; but it is not so easy to define their precise use as instruments of religious instruction. We must look in vain for those pictures of real life, which in later ages seem to bring us into contact with the great and the good, and we must rest satisfied with such an imaginative filling up of colour as we can give to the dim historic outlines of this antique cartoon. We know not in what sacred buildings these homilies were delivered, or under the shadow of what luxuriant trees. We cannot tell how often they were repeated, whether on the Lord's days alone, or in the cool of ordinary days, when the workman left his employ, and the declining shadows brought home the tiller of the

soil. But, in the absence of such precise and graphic information, we have what is really more valuable, the clear discovery that Ephraem made all events which were interesting to humanity, the occasions of his pious and eloquent instructions. It is remarkable that we find no traces of the first outward event of the Christian life, the dedication of the infant or the adult to God in baptism, being celebrated with a holy song; but abundant are the compositions intended to arouse the professed Christian to duty, to cheer his death-bed, or to stimulate survivors by the examples of the departed. Ephraem acted as though he had continually sounding in his ears the exhortation of St. Paul, "*Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine.*"

The great events of national history, especially such as in those times so frequently agitated society, were seized by Ephraem as affording occasions for producing or deepening religious impressions. The pestilence, or the irruption of savage hordes, attracted by the treasures of a civilized and refined people, often spread gloom and desolation around God's altars, and called forth Ephraem's most pathetic strains. In the Twenty-second Hymn of our former volume, the ravages of the plague caused him to say,—

> "Who would not weep, my brethren,
> With bitter wailings?
> Who does not suffer, and groan, and sigh,
> For the sword which is in our streets?
> Young men, beloved and comely,
> Wither suddenly like flowers!"

Then again, in the Evening Prayer, on p. 188 of this work, the still worse scourge of war and invasion is referred to :—

> "The altars which are destroyed pray with us,
> And the churches which are devastated,
> Which the children of Hagar have laid waste."

What led Ephraem to write the *Repentance of Nineveh?* This is a question we can only answer conjecturally, as an allusion or two in the body of the work are the only data to guide us to a conclusion. That it was composed for a season of fasting, appears from a passage beginning at verse 61, Part I. :—

> "When compared with that repentance,
> This of ours is like a dream;
> In the presence of that supplication,
> This of ours is but a shadow;
> Compared with that humiliation,
> This of ours is but the outward form;
> For they were generous to forgive
> Their debts in that fast."

The same thought is reiterated in the conclusion, and thus no doubt can be entertained that some season of humiliation gave Ephraem an opportunity of writing this homily. There is no internal evidence to shew that any special public event had occurred, any calamity which a general fast was intended to lessen or remove; a stated season, occurring every year, seems rather to be indicated. Perhaps tradition may here lend us a helping hand, and enable us to arrive at some definite conclusion.

Now, among the fasts of the Syrian Christians, continued to the present day, there is one called *the fast of the Nine-*

vites, which is of great antiquity, and is observed with great regularity and solemnity. Mr. Etheridge, in his highly interesting work, *The Syrian Churches, their Early History, Liturgies and Literature*, says, that the fast of the Ninevites began on the Monday, and lasted till the Thursday before Lent; and we learn from Mr. Badger, that among the Nestorians, it is observed in the most solemn manner by all classes, and very few take food during the three days that it lasts, until sunset. But we have more ancient authority on this subject, carrying up the fast to the early centuries of the Christian era, when its origin is lost amidst uncertain traditions.

Amrus, a Syrian writer of the fourteenth century, is quoted by Asseman *(Bibliotheca Orientalis*, tom. ii., p. 413) as relating that a pestilence broke out in the East during the primacy of Ezekiel, in the sixth century; but that a fast having been kept, it desisted from its ravages. His words are: "The reason why the above-named pestilence ceased, is this: The Metropolitan of Beth-Garma and the Bishop of Nineveh agreed among themselves to proclaim a fast, and made known their intention to Ezekiel. He, approving of their design, wrote letters throughout the East, urging all to be of one mind, and to fast and pray for the space of three days, and beseech God, that having pity upon them, He would receive their prayers, as He did those of the Ninevites, and avert death from His people. He moreover decreed that this fast of three days should be observed for ever. When they had done this, God heard them and took away the plague. From that time it

was called *the fast of the Ninevites*, because they had said, Let us imitate the Ninevites, and because, like them, they were delivered from the scourge."

A somewhat similar testimony is found in Arabic, being the narration of Elias Damascenus, a Nestorian bishop. He says: "Some persons contended with Abulabbasus Alphadlus, the son of Solomon, concerning the fast which is called *of the Ninevites*, and this happened at the time of the said fast, in the two hundred and ninetieth year of the Arabs, and the twelve hundred and fourteenth of the Greeks, on the eleventh day of January. Abulabbasus wrote to our father John, the Catholic,[c] by whose prayers may we find help from God, asking him the origin of the Ninevite fast, and of the fast of virgins. This is a copy of the question and the answer. QUESTION:—'Why, O Catholic father, honoured of God, is the fast of three days kept, called the fast of the Ninevites, which is observed as sacredly as Lent? For that matter between Jonah and the Ninevites relates to the old law, which we as sons of the Church are not bound by. Which of the fathers first instituted it, or brought it among us? For I remember, when about thirty years of age, to have heard a man more than a hundred years old say to me, that he and all the inhabitants of Cascara neglected that Ninevite fast, and did not then abstain from eating flesh,' &c. ANSWER:—'We return an answer to your questions in Arabic, because your letter to us is written in that lan-

c The title given to the primate or patriarch by the Nestorians.

guage, in order that without an interpreter you may read our reply as to the contention which agitates you. What you say regarding the children of the Church, that they are not bound to the observance of the old law, is indeed true. But we do not fast on those days on that account, although, by a figure of speech, the name of Nineveh is given to the fast, but from another cause, which we will now explain to you. There broke out in old time a pestilent disease, by which many of the inhabitants of Beth-Garma were affected and died. Sabar-Jesu, the bishop of that place, through whose prayers may God protect the Church, having called together his flock to prayer, exhorted them, saying, 'If Almighty God, through pity for the Ninevites, averted from them the punishment threatened by the mouth of his prophet Jonah, how much more will He have mercy upon us, who are His people, and who believe in Him and in His Christ, and in His true Spirit!' The people therefore obeyed the commands of their bishop, and, an assembly being convened, celebrated a season of supplication with the greatest possible seriousness; imitating those who, in former times, deprived their children and cattle of drink, and clothed their bodies in sackcloth. The memory of this event has come down to our own day. In this way God removed the scourge from them. And further, when Mar Timotheus, by whose prayers may God guard us, attained to the honour of the primacy, he decreed that this time of supplication should be kept, which from that time to this we have observed as a sacred custom. The

name of this fast is not *the Fast of the Ninevites*, but *the Fast of the Decree*, and the mention of Nineveh is made for the reason above given, on account both of the similarity of the threat and of the proclamation. In both cases they were delivered from somewhat the same scourge. Whoever then eats flesh on this fast, must pay the same penalties as if he should eat flesh in Lent.'" *(Bibliotheca Orientalis*, tom. ii., p. 427.)

These traditions have an air of probability about them, but they leave the time of the institution of the fast somewhat doubtful. We can scarcely think that the fast mentioned by Ephraem, as the occasion for his composing his homily, is the same as that now alluded to; yet the enquiry suggests itself, whether it was older than the time of Ephraem, or took its rise from the recital of his celebrated work on Jonah and the Ninevites. We have already intimated that the internal evidence of the piece seems to refer to some settled celebration, rather than to a great public calamity for which a fast was specially appointed; but such *à priori* reasonings must not be pressed too far. Let us collect the evidence together, and see whether any consistent hypothesis can be constructed upon it.

The site of ancient Nineveh appertained to those Syrians among whom the Gospel effected such an abundant entrance, and, no sooner were the Scriptures circulated among them than they began to attach importance to the spot, and invest it with all the interest which the preaching of Jonah and the deliverance of the condemned people

could give to it. It is not necessary to suppose that any tradition had existed from the time of Jonah to the era of the reception of the Christian religion; it is quite enough to know that the Old Testament was translated and circulated in Syria, to account for any degree of veneration attached to Nineveh and its past history, as far as it related to Jonah. In the vicinity of Mosul the tomb of Jonah has long been shewn, and the name Nebi-Yoonas, *the prophet Jonah*, is given to the village around it. The way in which Jonah is there honoured is well described in Mr. Badger's work, and we are sure the following extract on the subject will be interesting to our readers :—

"Directly opposite to Mosul, and about half a mile from the Tigris, is the large Moslem village of Nebi-Yoonas, built upon one of the principal mounds of Nineveh, and in a line with Koyoonjuk. It can scarcely be doubted that many valuable relics lie buried under the modern village, but the veneration of the Mohammedans for the tomb of the prophet Jonah would deem sacrilegious and profane any attempt to excavate near the mosque which covers it, or among the graves which are scattered over the surface of the mound. The mosque itself is held to be so sacred that no Christian is allowed to enter its precincts. Through the influence of one of the pashas, my sister was permitted to visit it, and from her I received the following description of the interior :—'After passing through a spacious court to a fine open terrace, we descended into the mosque, which is a square building lighted

by several windows of stained glass. The eastern end is separated from the nave by a row of noble arches, giving it the appearance of an aisle.[d] At the southern extremity there is a pulpit of elaborate workmanship, and the floor is covered with rich carpets. A door, which is always kept locked, opens into a narrow passage about thirty feet long, from which we descended through another entrance into a square and lofty apartment with a concave roof. In the centre of this stands a box or coffin, measuring ten feet by five, and raised about five feet from the ground, on the south end of which is placed an enormous turban composed of the most costly silks and shawls. The coffin itself is also covered with equally rich materials, and is encircled by a railing surmounted with large silver knobs, on which, as also on the walls around, are suspended a number of embroidered towels and silk bathing cloths. The walls are further decorated with mirrors, party-coloured porcelain, and sentences from the Koran written in the florid style of Arabic caligraphy. In one corner are placed a gilt ewer and basin, a ball of French soap, a comb, and a pair of scissors, for the use of the prophet Jonah, who, the Mohammedans believe, rises from his tomb at the set times of prayer, and performs his ablutions according to the strict injunctions of their law. The Mohammedans in general deem the tomb far

d "The Christians say that this building was once a church. The order of the interior as above described, so foreign to the plan general in mosques, seems to favour the common tradition. The separation of the eastern end indicates the position of the bema."

too sacred an object to be approached, and for the most part content themselves with looking at it from a grated window in the body of the mosque.' "[e]

Although antiquity is not consentient as to the place of Jonah's burial, we feel no hesitation in attributing the tradition which places it at Mosul to the Christians of that locality. We see precisely the process by which other worthies have had attributed to them tombs which they never occupied, in places where they never lived. Nothing can be more antecedently improbable than that Jonah should reside at Nineveh,[f] and if he did not, what possible reason could there be for his being buried there? The tradition is only important to our present object, as shewing how early his name and history were associated with the site of Nineveh by the Syrian Christians. There can be little doubt that this feeling was anterior to the time of Ephraem, and that the great popularity of the prophet at Edessa led that father to use the events of his life for the purpose of instructing the people.

e *The Nestorians and their Rituals*, vol. i., p. 85.

f Something far more valuable than the bones of the son of Amittai may be expected to be found whenever it shall be practicable to dig beneath his reputed tomb. This is referred to by the Rev. W. Drake, in the Introduction to his *Notes on Jonah and Hosea*, just published:—"Whenever the feeling on the part of the native population, which has hitherto been an obstacle to researches at Nebi-Yunus, shall have been overcome, it may be hoped that some light may be thrown upon the date of Jonah's mission to Nineveh. Colonel Rawlinson infers, from bricks found at Nebi-Yunus, that it was raised as a substructure for a royal palace by Adrammelech II., the grandson of Divanubara, c. 830—800 B. C., who was one of the four kings to whose reigns the date of Jonah's mission must be assigned."

After Ephraem's death, his works were held in such high estimation that they were read in the services of the Church, and to this day they form important portions of the Syrian rituals. We have seen that one on Nineveh, a portion, no doubt, of the piece now translated, is used by the Nestorians. A mere floating tradition thus became fixed and almost hallowed by pious literary associations, and we can easily imagine that the *Repentance of Nineveh* would be used whenever public calamities called for seasons of special fasting. The Syriac mind was thus prepared, and at length, on an occasion like that already referred to, the breaking out of a pestilence at Beth-Garma and other places led to a periodical observance of a season of fasting and humiliation. The process, according to our theory, was simply this:—Jonah and Nineveh, before the time of Ephraem, had become hallowed names in the Syrian Church, and this gave occasion to this father to compose the *Repentance of Nineveh*. This in its turn, by its popularity and its use on occasions of fasting, led to the transferring the name of Nineveh to a Christian solemnity.

The homily, thus suggested by the return of an appointed season of penitence and prayer, or by some special calamity, demanding the pitying aid of heaven, was written by Ephraem with an eye to popular effect, as the means of improving the hearts of his people. It might have been somewhere about the year A.D. 360, when his mental powers were in their prime. How highly interesting would be the MS. of such a composition were it pos-

sible to obtain it; but although all our Syriac MSS. are of later date, we may nevertheless have some conception of the outward form which Ephraem's codex would take. There are now MSS. in the British Museum brought from the Nitrian Lakes, which are only a few years younger than the copy of Ephraem would be were it now in existence. For example, the MS. of the Syriac version of the *Theophania* of Eusebius, the text of which was printed under the editorship of Dr. S. Lee, is stated by Mr. Cureton, on unquestionable authority, to be, at this time, one thousand four hundred and forty-one years old! As Ephraem died in A.D. 372, this MS. must have been written about forty years after that event, a time too short to make much difference in the art of writing, and we may therefore conclude that the *Repentance of Nineveh*, as it first came from the hands of the scribe, had an outward form not unlike that of the *Theophania*. A calculation like this is pleasing, because it shews us that the recovery of the autographs of the master minds of antiquity is not so hopeless as it sometimes appears. We are aware that authors did not always write their own compositions, but still they must often have done so, and in most cases would make the first draught from which a more artist-like copy was taken. Especially in the case of metrical compositions, it is difficult to conceive of a scribe writing from dictation. Any one who studies the heptasyllabics of Ephraem must see at once that the verses are often laboured, and that many attempts must have been sometimes made to bring the line into its proper

dimensions. When it is remembered further that these ancient MSS. are often very perfectly preserved, the vellum white, the characters distinct, and the whole exhibiting the freshness of this century rather than the hoar age of the fifth or sixth, we shall be pardoned for hoping that from the *débris* of oriental libraries may yet proceed even greater treasures than have been hitherto gained from them.

Ephraem had his choice of metres, but we cannot say that he had to decide between poetry and prose. As far as his literary remains can give us information, all his homilies took the form of verse, and we may therefore conclude that such was the established mode of public address. His commentaries certainly are prosaic, but they do not seem to have been intended for public delivery. This however is an open question, which future researches may decide. He chose verse however, and from those different kinds which were in common use he selected the heptasyllabic. As we have said in the Introduction to the *Hymns and Homilies*, this metre is more used in stately and mournful subjects, although by no means confined to them. Ephraem has shewn, in this piece, how well it is adapted for an address to a popular audience, combining historical relation with ethical instruction. He also preferred a continuous and uniform flow of the verses, to those variations in the strophes which he often employs with good effect in the hymns and shorter homilies.

We have no evidence that Ephraem's literary apparatus extended beyond the Holy Scriptures, when he applied

himself to the task of writing the *Repentance of Nineveh.* We do not mean to intimate that he was destitute of other resources, for he shews in his commentaries and controversial works that he had access to numerous sources of information, and it is more likely that abundance of books were at his command than that he was short of them. But there is a close adherence to the biblical account of Jonah and the Ninevites, with an occasional use of tradition, as is pointed out in the Notes. With the Old and New Testaments Ephraem was thoroughly familiar, and his quotations, either from memory or actual reference, are constant, and very numerous.

That Ephraem used the *Peschito* translation is made evident by the parallel passages we have so frequently exhibited in the Notes, but it is more than probable that he also had at hand a Syriac version of the *Septuagint.*[g] From his criticism on a passage of Jonah before referred to, Asseman argues that he understood Greek, but the conclusion is by no means a self-evident one. Such criticisms might be current in Syriac literature, as they are in our own. With us a vast amount of learning may be displayed by a man who knows very little of any tongue but that which his mother taught him. That Ephraem could read Hebrew need not be questioned, for it was but a dialectical variation of his own language; but tradition, confirmed by many circumstances, affirms that he was ignorant of Greek. In the *Acta Ephraemi*, in Syriac,

[g] See note *i*, p 126, and note *d*, p. 182.

prefixed to the sixth volume of his works, he is said to have been miraculously taught Greek, in answer to the prayer of Basil, on his ordination as Deacon. This is to us a proof that the common opinion of his ignorance of that language is correct, and that the legend was invented, in later centuries, to account for the abundance of his works translated into Greek.

Whatever doubts may be entertained of Ephraem's literary resources, there can be none that he applied to the Fountain of all wisdom for ability to devise and execute the work he had undertaken. Nothing is more characteristic of this great man than his habitual and undisguised dependence on an intellect superior to his own. This feeling is not so much exhibited in formal prayers for guidance, at the commencement of his tasks, as in the habitual tone of his compositions, which unmistakeably prove him to have been a man of earnest prayer. It will be interesting to quote a few illustrations of our remark. The following are all taken from the homilies, *Adversus Scrutatores (Opera*, tom. vi.) :—

"O Lord, I will knock at Thy door,
That Thy gift may rest upon me in righteousness;
That my poverty may be quickly made rich,
For it owes a myriad of talents;
O Lord, make me Thy creditor,
That I may lend to Thee that which is Thine own."

Sermo v., p. 11.

"Thou, Lord, hast written this,—
'Open thy mouth and I will fill it;'
Behold, Thy servant opens his mouth,

And his understanding also, to Thee:
Fill him, Lord, with Thy gift,
That according to Thy will
I may hymn Thy praise."

Sermo x., p. 22.

"O Lord, how can Thy servant cease
From giving praise to Thee!
How can my tongue refrain itself
From returning Thee thanks!
How can I conceal the sweet abundant stream
Which Thou hast opened for my thirsty spirit!
I will sing to Thee of that which is Thine own,
Even Thy glory, from Thine own gift;
For by Thee, O Lord, I am enriched,
And by Thee I receive increase."

Sermo xvi., p. 31.

If the writer thus habitually felt and acknowledged his entire dependence upon God, in his minor productions, we cannot doubt that he did so when about to preach to the people, at a time of public interest and excitement.

The homily is now prepared, and its author proceeds to deliver it. Was this done in a sacred temple, long since crumbled into dust? Or did Ephraem go out to the forum, and deliver his teaching to vast crowds in the open air? His great popularity at Edessa demanded a large audience, and he doubtless had one; but where, we cannot tell. Neither can we inform our readers, on good authority, of the personal appearance of him who ascended the rostrum; of the proportions of the body which formed the vehicle of such a soul, we must be contented to remain in the same ignorance which refuses to solve a thousand similar questions. In the *Acta Ephraemi*, Basil is said to have de-

scribed him as meek and simple in appearance, and badly clothed; but the last characteristic, though it may be true, is probably a monkish ornament, arbitrarily put upon him. Gregory Nyssa, in his encomium on Ephraem after his death, says properly, that "it is not necessary to speak of the bodily form of godly men;" yet he afterwards tells us that he had such a marvellous eloquence, that his speech alone, even if his countenance were not seen, "was a divinely formed key to open the treasures of the wealthy;" and that "his visage was angel-like, moving hard men to pity and kindness." A full-length portrait of him is prefixed to the Roman edition of his works, taken from a painting on the wall of a monastery, but nothing is known as to its fidelity. The figure is tall and commanding, but the face is "meek and simple" in its expression, and breathes kindness. The eyes are rather heavy. The head is narrow, and the forehead remarkably high. He wears the garment of a monk, over which is a mantle, in the hood of which the head is partly enveloped. His right hand holds a scroll, on which is written, in Greek, "Charity and temperance purify the soul."

After those religious services which always formed an important part of the public engagements of the early church, accompanied by the musical performances of those bands of young persons whom he had trained to the duties of the choir,[h] Ephraem delivered the oration which was intended to deepen the emotions of penitence, and give

[h] See *Hymns and Homilies*, Introduction, p. xxxviii.

them a practical bearing. From a calculation we have made, it appears that the homily would occupy nearly two hours in the recitation; a long time, according to our modern customs, and far beyond the general length of the sermons of those days. But then the occasion was an extraordinary one, and the style of the sermon highly attractive and interesting. A narrative is always more capable of fixing the thoughts than a merely didactic composition, and this would be especially the case in an address to an audience. The attention might flag with some, when Ephraem touched on deep and mysterious themes, but would again be aroused, as he returned to the story, and urged on his way to the final result. Especially would a deep interest be developed, if, as is probable, some public calamity impended over the hearers. Their sympathies would be awakened as they listened to the descriptions of the mortal dread of the Ninevites; while their hope would gather strength from the marvellous display of God's mercy to the repentant.

In the whole history of the church, no scene would perhaps be more intensely attractive, than that of which Ephraem was the centre while delivering this homily, had the pencil of a contemporary caught its features, and perpetuated its strangely varying colours. That the audience was intellectual, even above the average of such assemblies, we gather from the whole of Ephraem's ministrations to the people of Edessa. They could enter into and understand the subtle and recondite heresies of their day, as we learn from the pieces of Ephraem written to put them on

their guard against the foe. They were highly susceptible to the charms of music, modulated to poems which treated of holy mysteries, and expounded sublime doctrines. A people must have been refined who could take part in, and enjoy, the very peculiar species of liturgical forms provided for them. Besides all this, Ephraem had a school at Edessa, and many men, destined to be mighty in the Church, were his pupils and hearers. Probably Zenobius, Isaac, Simeon, and Abraham heard him that day, men who afterwards enriched the Church with their discourses and expositions, as well as by their virtues. A population hung upon the lips of the preacher, capable of enjoying his eloquent heptasyllabics, and among them the future ministers of the sanctuary caught the inspiration which was to fit them for their future labours.

As all classes are alluded to in the *Repentance of Nineveh*, so all would be moved by turns, as their stations in life, their ages, or their characters, became the subject of the remarks of the preacher. Kings and nobles felt they were not spared; the rich would learn the vanity of their wealth, and the poor be made more contented with their lot. How would the hard-hearted usurer tremble, as Ephraem so graphically described the misery of both the debtor and creditor, in whose transactions justice and benevolence might be forgotten! The tender emotions would be excited, as the feelings of parents and affianced lovers were portrayed so vividly by the speaker. The mother clasped her infant closer to her breast, as she thought on the agonies of the parents among the Ninevites; and the

children and young persons felt thankful, that no doom like that threatened by Jonah awaited them. But all was not favourable to the preacher's object, for there, as in all similar assemblies, were found the obdurate, whose seared consciences were past feeling, and refused to be renewed. In the midst of almost general contrition these would eye the speaker with dislike, and even hatred, depicted in their looks, because he did not prophecy soft words, or allow them to be undisturbed in their sins.

But the conclusion at length was reached, and the children of the east dispersed to their homes, or went in the cool of the day to converse on what they had listened to, by the banks of the Daison. Ephraem returned to his cell, and prayed to God for a blessing upon his labours. In conversation with his disciples the day closed; a day soon forgotten among men, but always to be remembered in the secret annals of the spiritual Church of God. The seed had been broad-cast among multitudes of thoughtful human beings; in whose hearts did it take root and become fruitful? *That* the great day of the Lord shall declare, when, among all the other resuscitated events of this world's history, an account will have to be rendered of the results of Ephraem's homily, THE REPENTANCE OF NINEVEH!

It is worthy of enquiry, how far this homily may be considered the normal form of Ephraem's pulpit orations; although there are not materials enough to guide to a satisfactory reply. The other exegetical discourses, printed

with this, are of various lengths, the most extended being not more than a fourth part of the length of this one, occupying probably twenty minutes in the delivery. Throughout Ephraem's metrical works, there are numerous pieces of similar compass, and such may reasonably be looked upon as his pulpit efforts, the shorter compositions taking less prominent parts in various religious services.

In the *Exhortations to Repentance*, there is a homily of great length, which comes nearer to the style of the *Repentance of Nineveh* than any other we have seen. It is the fourth piece in that collection, and is nearly as long as the latter work; like that also, it is heptasyllabic. No text of Scripture is affixed to it, but it is really a comment on the beautiful episode of Simon and the sinful woman, in the seventh chapter of St. Luke. There is necessarily less of history, and more of doctrine and exhortation, than in the work on Nineveh; but still the characteristics of both are alike, and point them out as destined to the same purpose as addresses to an audience. We give a few verses, which have presented themselves *ad aperturam libri*, although they are highly suggestive of important matters (*Opera*, tom. vi., p. 402):—

"To the baptistery of tears,
She descended, that she might be purified;
If she had been ashamed of publicity,
She had come up without forgiveness;
She took ointment and tears,
And drew near to the Lord of the holy,
That all the rites of baptism,
Might be complete in that washing;
The waters she poured out were few,

And she mixed them with precious ointment.
She there accomplished the mystery
Of holy baptism."[i]

We need only add, under this head of our subject, that in the first part of a German translation of Ephraem's life, recently published as a specimen of a version of his Syriac works,[j] the *Sermones Exegetici* are spoken of as being probably fragments of a larger exegetical work. To this opinion we are unable to give our concurrence, as the pieces have, individually, too much completeness to sustain the theory.

II. On the literary characteristics of the "Repentance of Nineveh."

A sermon in metre, constructed on the plan of some popular poem, would, with us, appear almost ridiculous; and, by any one ignorant of the existence of Ephraem's metrical homilies, considered a task which no wise person would think of accomplishing. But, like many other presumptions founded on existing customs and manners, this

i In the second and fourth verses of this extract, the allusion is plain to the *immersion* which adheres to the *notion* of baptism; but the ninth verse plainly expresses what was the *practice* in the time of Ephraem. *She completed all the rites*, among which was the application of a small portion of water, the shedding of her tears imitating the current mode of its application. The Syriac word rendered *forgiveness* in the fourth verse, is that falsely translated *indulgence* by Asseman, referred to in p. xxi above. Here the woman is said to receive *at* baptism, what Asseman makes to be something designed to meet the difficulty of sin *after* baptism!

j *Das Leben des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers*, von J. Alsleben, Berlin, 1853.

opinion is proved to be ill-founded. Such a work has been executed, and in a style to excite admiration and applause; and, more than this, the whole Christian people of Syria in the early centuries were publicly instructed in metre.

And yet, with the Old Testament in our hands, why should a rhythmical or metrical pulpit discourse seem such an impossibility? Among the ancient Jews, inspired prophets instructed the people in highly poetical language, and in an external form strongly contrasted with prose. The sacred writers employed the speech of ordinary life in their histories and chronicles; but, when they were called to reprove the vices of their countrymen, to proclaim the wrath of God to guilty nations, or to utter predictions of things to come, they ascended to a higher region of oratory, and discoursed in parallelisms and in rhythm. It is true that we meet with no uniformly *measured* verses in the Hebrew prophets, but metre is only a variety of poetic form, and not a distinct genus. Admit the possibility and propriety of preaching in poetry, and its various forms come as a matter of course. The free parallelisms of the Hebrews, our own blank verse, or the Syrian measures of a fixed number of syllables, are but different modifications of the same principle.

But while we can see no antecedent reason why a sermon should not be composed in measures, or in rhyme, even in these more cold and precise northern regions; such a course is necessarily exceptional, and never could come into general use. As in the case of Ephraem, there must

be a fit occasion, and a competent man, to warrant any striking deviation from established customs. In his case, the occasion was the previous use of metres to counteract the heresy of Bardesanes and others; and he possessed the true poetic faculty, which gave life to outward forms; so that while his verses were measured, the soul which animated them was free. To write a homily in metre or in rhyme would not be difficult to any one with a good flow of words and a correct ear at command; but this would be merely the casket to contain the gem, and not poetry itself. Our meaning cannot be better illustrated than by a reference to Ephraem, and those who came after him as imitators of his style of public instruction. In him, body and soul were united; the form and the substance, the measured line and the breathing thoughts which animated it, were both alike in his power, and he skilfully employed them. But his successors, less eminently endowed, retained the measure, but lost all the valuable things it circumscribed and controlled. Hence, while Ephraem's metrical homilies are admirable productions of genius, those of many of the Syrian writers are inane and commonplace; imitating the outward form, but scarcely making an attempt to catch the spirit of the great master in this branch of literature.

So long a homily as the *Repentance of Nineveh*, all written in verses of seven syllables, would be in danger of becoming very monotonous. The short lines, although, in most cases, destitute of rhyme, would necessarily fall upon the ear with almost a soporific influence, and lull to inat-

tention, instead of arousing to energy and life. But this tendency, more or less affecting all rhythmical compositions, was counteracted in the case of Ephraem by the great variety he gave to his matter, both in its subjects and in the forms they assumed. He used rapid transitions, passing easily "from grave to gay, from lively to severe," and, by the introduction of new topics, allows no opportunity for the attention to become weary. Thus, the descriptions he gives of the fears and great miseries of the Ninevites, would, if collected together and read without any break or interval, become irksome from the very accumulation of images of apprehension and sorrow. But they are dispersed by Ephraem very skilfully over the whole piece; being interrupted by interesting, but contrasted circumstances, so that the mention of them again is rather a relief than a burden.

Thus, at the commencement of the homily, we are introduced at once to the results of Jonah's preaching; the fears of the people, and their consequent efforts at reformation. After proceeding to some length, this description is relieved by the reference to the intended sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham, and the curious parallel presented between the reasoning of the father of the faithful, and the parents in Nineveh. At the appearance of the king in public, the lamentations of the people burst out afresh, and another succession of mournful images is brought before us, to be interrupted by the advice given the people by the monarch, his description of the flood, and of his interview with Jonah. While listening to the account given of the

stern uncompromising fidelity of the Hebrew prophet, and the very interesting way in which it is illustrated, we forget the Ninevites from the attraction of quite a different subject. But the king putting on sackcloth, is the signal for another outbreak of popular grief; until, after several of these alternations in the story, the final result is arrived at.

If Ephraem's individual descriptions are looked at, they will be found to exhibit an exuberance of poetic figures, which coöperate with the artistic arrangement of the parts of the piece in preventing the whole from being dull and wearisome. Again and again he presents the same idea in different forms, employs new epithets, and fresh verbal arrangements. He appears to have aimed at exhausting the scenes he depicted, so as to leave nothing undescribed which belonged to the picture presented to his intellect. This seems sometimes carried to excess when we read the piece; but the effect was very different when it was delivered as an oration to the people. The eloquence of public speakers depends for its excellence, as measured by the effect produced, not upon the condensation of the thoughts so much as on their being amplified and presented in various lights, until they seize hold of the mind of the hearer and make a permanent impression. Some of the most successful preachers have owed their popularity to this feature of their discourses. Indeed, a book to be read, and a speech to be recited to an audience, can never be properly judged by the same rules. Works which enchain us at the fire-side, would fail to do so if delivered

from the rostrum; and, *vice versâ*, sermons which have produced wonders when accompanied by the living voice, have proved comparatively uninteresting when printed and published. Ephraem therefore must be estimated, in this work, *as a preacher*, or his proper value will not be understood. We hope the homily will be found striking and valuable in the form of a printed translation, but we beg our readers to criticise it as a sermon from the pulpit. Reiterations, and a certain excessive diffusiveness, which may here look like blemishes, were real adaptations to produce that noblest of all ends—the religious reformation of a Christian congregation.

The epic completeness of this work will be obvious to every reader. As the wrath of Achilles forms the real subject of the *Iliad*, to which all other characters and events are subsidiary, so the repentance of the Ninevites is the centre to which, in this homily, all other matters converge. It is brought under our notice before anything else. In the order of time Jonah should have been presented to us, as confronted and examined by the king, but that would have delayed the introduction of the affrighted and penitent people. *They* are first brought before us, and afterwards, when joining in the common consternation, the king relates what he had seen and what he thought of Jonah. Even the reference to the hardened state of the Jews, near the end, is intended to subserve the one ruling idea of the whole composition. What the Ninevites saw of the intense wickedness of the land of promise, tended to make them more thankful for the deli-

verance which their hearty repentance and amendment had accomplished for them.

The unity pervading the homily will also satisfactorily account for the almost entire absence of Christian ideas and associations which will be observed by the reader. Both Jonah and the Ninevites lived hundreds of years before the advent of our Lord, and therefore could have known nothing of Him; it could thus only have been by perpetrating anachronisms that Ephraem could have introduced thoughts peculiar to the Christian dispensation. But as regards the application of his discourse to the auditory, the case was different. Nothing in the nature of the subject prevented him from enforcing repentance and reformation on Christian principles, but as this was not necessary, the length of the homily afforded sufficient excuse for the almost abrupt conclusion. Ephraem doubtless felt, as all preachers should do, that it was not necessary in every sermon to furnish a body of divinity; that his views of Christian doctrine were sufficiently known; that his hearers were Christian men and women, taught by him continually in the peculiar doctrines of their faith; and that, consequently, it was better to confine himself to the plain explication of his text than to deviate from it. There is no general cause of complaint against Ephraem for avoiding the ideas and language of the New Testament; on the contrary, his works plainly indicate that there his best affections were given, and that Christ and His Gospel constituted the grand topics

of his ministrations, and had the warmest affections of his heart.

Respecting the metre of this homily there is little to be added to the information given on the subject in the former volume. It is uniformly heptasyllabic, and exhibits few anomalies of a striking character, although abundant materials are furnished by it for the study of the nicer prosodical variations and peculiarities, which we may presume were attended to by Ephraem. Much more study than we are able to give to the subject is requisite before anything like completeness can be given to a system of Syriac prosody. We have received communications on the subject which prove that it has excited some degree of interest. The following hints are too excellent and practical to be lost, and we supply them here for the guidance of any who may wish to enter fully into the investigation of the metres :—

"It may perhaps be worth your while to pursue your enquiry into the metres of the Syriac hymns, *by assuming that they are copies from Greek models.* If you would take the trouble to compare them, especially as regards the pentasyllabic and heptasyllabic verse, with the *monometric hypercatalectic* and the *dimetric catalectic* varieties of the iambic and trochaic metres of Greek poetry, you might very probably find them derived from these. By paying attention to the recurrence of the same words in the same *places* of the verse, combined with observation of emphatic words and syllables clogged with consonants,

as indications of *long* quantity: and of the *reverse* as connected with *short* quantity: it is not improbable that you might master a good deal of the prosody; and in this investigation, the known rules of the Greek metres, including those of the certain and uncertain feet, and of the cæsura, would, on the foregoing assumption, be a great help. This assumption is itself a very reasonable one. If Bardesanes borrowed the Greek *music*, there is every probability that he borrowed, at the same time, the Greek *metres*. We are told that Ambrose borrowed music for Milan from Edessa;—here again is a probability that he took the Syrian measures with their music; but we know that Ambrose's metres were the short iambic and trochaic of the Greeks. In this class of metre there is not that difference between a measurement by feet or syllables (through a system of equivalents) which, as you remark, prevails in the longer measures of Greek poetry. Fortunatus's hymn, beginning, 'Pange lingua gloriosi,' in trochaic measure, consists of a regular alternation of lines of eight and seven syllables, and Ambrose's iambics all consist of eight syllables (dimeter acatelectic =four feet)."

We have divided the homily into parts, and feel no doubt that the arrangement will be satisfactory to the reader. The ancients appear to have been unaware of the advantages to be derived from the division of their compositions, or perhaps we should rather say, from those artificial pauses which both relieve the eye and the

mind. At all events we have, by this plan, made the homily more attractive to the generality of those who will peruse it. Its proportions are better perceived, and the harmony of the whole is pointed out by the short headings of the separate parts.

List of Authors.

Besides the works mentioned in the *Hymns and Homilies*, most of which have been used in the compilation of this volume, the following deserve notice.

"Die heilige Muse der Syrer.—Gesänge des heiligen Kirchenvaters Ephraem. Gewählt und aus dem Syrischen übersetzt von P. Pius Zingerle, Benedicktiner des Stiftes Mariaberg und Religionslehrer am k. k. Gymnasium in Meran. Innsbruck, 1833,"

"Gesänge gegen die Grübler über die Geheimnisse Gottes.—Aus dem heiligen Ephraem gewählt und metrisch aus dem Syrischen übersetzt von P. Pius Zingerle, etc., etc. 1834."

These are the works we tried in vain to procure before the publication of the former volume. They contain many of Ephraem's best pieces, some in prose, others in free rhythm, and others in metres in imitation of the original. The whole is pervaded by great taste and learning. Many of the pieces are accompanied with notes, in a form similar to those appended to the *Hymns and Homilies*.

"Festkränze aus Libanons Gärten. Aus dem Syrischen, von P. Pius Zingerle, etc., etc. Villengen, 1846."

This is a collection of pieces in prose and verse, taken from various sources, which are not generally indicated.

Many of them are from the Syrian Liturgies. It is unaccompanied with notes.

"Thesaurus Hymnologicus, sive Hymnorum, Canticorum, Sequentiarum, circa annum M.D. usitatarum Collectio amplissima. Carmina collegit, apparatu critico ornavit, veterum interpretum notas selectas suasque adjecit Herm. Adalbert Daniel, Ph. D. Halis, 1841."

This valuable work is in three volumes, the last of which contains the Hymns of the Greek and Syriac Churches. The latter are only partially translated. They are of all ages, and a comparison of them will exhibit the great decline in the genius and spirit of the writers since the time of Ephraem.

"Codex Syriaco-Hexaplaris. Liber quartus regum e Codice Parisiensi; Isaias, duodecim prophetæ minores, Proverbia, Jobus, Canticum, Threni, Ecclesiastes, e Codice Mediolanensi. Edidit, et commentariis illustravit Henricus Middeldorpf. Pars I., Textus Syriacus. Berolini, 1835."

"The Syrian Churches, their Early History, Liturgies and Literature. With a literal translation of the four Gospels from the Peschito, by J. W. Etheridge. London, 1846."

A very interesting collection of various matters relating to the Syrian Churches.

"Das heilige Evangelium des Johannes. Syrisch in Harklensischer Uebersetzung, mit vocalen und den Puncten Kuschoi und Rucoch, nach einer Vaticanischen handschrift; nebst kritischen Anmerkungen von Georg Heinrich Bernstein. Leipzig, 1853."

A most beautifully printed volume, of great value, as exhibiting many variations of the common use of the Syriac vowel points.

"Who can now be astonished
That we wander from the way,
That error should become strong through our weakness?
Our infirmity is indeed great.—
But if the power of union should return to us,
And our harmonious love,
Who could then overcome us?
Since both on earth and in heaven
Our stedfast faith would loose and bind!"

Adversus Scrutatores.

The Repentance of Nineveh.

By

Ephraem Syrus.

"O Lord, I ask not for gold,
For it is the Mammon of unrighteousness;
Neither for treasures and possessions,
For they procure not salvation.
Forgiveness is better than gold,
And the remission of sins than much silver.

* * * * *

O Lord, I have escaped from iniquity,
Like a bird from the midst of the snare;
In the nest of thy cross I will make my refuge
Which the serpent cannot approach.
Behold, O Lord, I have fled from my sins,
Like a dove from the meshes of the net;
I will dwell on high in thy cross,
To which the dragon cannot reach."

Parœneses ad Pœnitentiam.

THE REPENTANCE OF NINEVEH.

FROM THE PROPHECY OF JONAH.—"ARISE, GO TO NINEVEH, THE GREAT CITY, AND PREACH AGAINST IT THE PREACHING THAT I TELL THEE. AND JONAH AROSE, AND WENT TO NINEVEH ACCORDING TO THE WORD OF THE LORD."[a]

Praemium.

BEHOLD, Jonah preached in Nineveh,
A Jew among the wicked.
That mighty one ascended to the city,[b]
And disturbed it with words of terror.
The heathen city[c] was made sorrowful
By means of the Hebrew preacher,
And became tumultuous like the ocean
Through Jonah, who came up from the sea.
Yea, tempests beat upon it
Like waves in the midst of the deep.
Jonah went down to the sea and troubled it;
He ascended to the dry land and terrified it:
The sea raged when he fled away;
When he preached the dry land was agitated.
By prayer[d] the sea was quieted,

The dry land also by repentance.
He offered prayer in the great fish,[e]
And the Ninevites in the mighty city.
Prayer set Jonah at liberty,
And supplication the Ninevites.

Jonah fled from God,
And the Ninevites from holiness.
Justice placed them in fetters,
Yea, both of them, like criminals.
They offered repentance to her,
And were both delivered.[f]
She preserved Jonah in the sea,
And the Ninevites in the midst of the dry land.
From his own case[g] Jonah learned
That it was proper the penitent should live.
Grace gave to him, in himself,
An example on behalf of sinners;
That as he was drawn out of the sea
He should draw out the sinking city.
Thus Nineveh, that stagnant lake,[h] was moved
By Jonah who sprang from the deep.

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[a] This is the title of the Syriac copy, but we cannot say how far it has authority. The quotation literally agrees with the *Peschito*.

[b] "The city."—Two words are used for *city* by Ephraem, ܟܐܪܝܐ and ܡܕܝܢܬܐ, the latter having, in general use, the more

specific sense of *citadel*. This gives a variety to the Syriac text which we cannot copy in English, though in a few instances we have given to ܡܕܝܢܬܐ the rendering *state*.

c "The heathen city."—This might be rendered *the city of nations*, and would then convey an idea of the great size and influence of Nineveh. But the context seems rather to require that ܥܡܡܝܐ should be here used, as frequently in the New Testament, for *gentiles, ethnici;*—a *heathen* city is made sad by a *Jew*. Thus Benedict translates, *ethnica civitas*.

d "By prayer."—The printed text reads ܒܥܡܡܐ an error, evidently for ܒܥܠܐ; a rare instance of mistake in the Roman edition.

e "The great fish."—ܢܘܢܐ ܪܒܐ, the words used in the *Peschito*, which Ephraem probably employed in composing this piece, as all the principal terms agree with that version. In the *Codex Syriaco-Hexaplaris*, edited by Middledorpf (Berlin, 1835), the great fish is ܢܘܢܐ ܕܓܠܐ, the Greek κῆτος.

f "Were both delivered."—Sy., ܬܪܝܗܘܢ ܥܒܕ *their two sides*, or *parts;* Michaelis in Castell gives the phrase, and renders it *utraque pars*, but without an example.

g "From his own case."—Sy., ܡܢ ܓܘܫܡܗ ܘܡܢ ܓܘܫܡܗ *from him and by him*. Benedict, "*A suo ac in suo Jonas didicit, misericordiam pœnitentibus esse tribuendam.*

h "That stagnant lake."—The Syriac word is ܒܪܟܬܐ *lacus, stagnum, piscina*. It is worthy of notice that this expression is applied to Nineveh by the prophet Nahum (ii. 9, or ii. 8 English translation), "Nineveh is like a pool of water;" and there can be no doubt that Ephraem had that passage in view. The *Peschito* uses the word for the Hebrew, בְּרֵכָה. The thought here seems to be, "Although Nineveh was at ease, like a stagnant lake, the eloquence of Jonah disturbed and agitated her." Perhaps this is the sense of the Hebrew text, "But Nineveh is of old like a pool of water, *yet they shall flee away*:" and the idea is confirmed by the LXX.

Part the First.

JONAH PREACHES IN NINEVEH. — HIS TESTIMONY IS RECEIVED AND CREDITED.—THE EFFECTS ON PUBLIC MORALS.—JONAH COMPARED TO A FAITHFUL PHYSICIAN.—THE KING SETS AN EXAMPLE OF REPENTANCE, AND HIS SUBJECTS FOLLOW.

THE just man, Jonah, opened his mouth;
Nineveh listened and was troubled.
A single Hebrew preacher
Made the whole[a] city to fear.
His mouth spake[b] and delivered its doom,[c]
And distributed death to his hearers.
The feeble herald[d] stood up,
In a city[e] of mighty men.[f]
His voice broke the heart of kings,
He overturned the city upon them.
By one word which cut off hope,
He made them drink the cup of wrath.[g]
Kings heard him and were humbled,
They threw away their crowns and became lowly;
Noble men listened and were filled with consternation,
Instead of robes they clothed themselves with sackcloth;

Venerable old men heard him,
And covered their heads with ashes;
Rich men heard him and laid open
Their treasures before the poor;
Those heard him who had lent to others,[h]
And gave their bills as alms;[i]
Debtors[j] heard him and became just,
So as not to deny their obligation;[k]
Borrowers returned what they owed;
Creditors[l] became forgiving;
Every man, respecting his salvation,
Became righteously solicitous.

No man was found there,
Who contrived how he might defraud;
They contended in a holy strive,
How each should gain his soul.[m]
Robbers listened to Jonah,
And men of rapine left that which was their own.
Every man judged himself,
And was merciful to his fellow;
No one judged his companion,
For each one judged himself.[n]
Every man reproved himself,
For wrath was reproving all men.
Murderers heard him and made confession,
For they cast off the fear of judges;
Judges also heard him and neglected *their office*;
Through the *impending* wrath plaints were silent;
They were unwilling to judge, even righteously,

Lest they should be righteously condemned.
Every man sowed mercy,
That from it he might reap salvation.

Sinners listened to Jonah,
And each one confessed his sins.
The polluted city heard him,
And quickly put off its abominations.
Masters also heard him,
And proclaimed freedom to their bondsmen;
Slaves heard him in righteousness,
And increased their respect for their masters.
At the voice of Jonah honourable women
Brought down their pride in sackcloth;
The repentance was indeed sincere,
When haughty women put on humility![o]

When compared with that repentance,[p]
This of ours is like a dream;
In the presence of that supplication,
This of ours is but a shadow;
Compared with that humiliation,
This of ours is but the outward form.[q]
For they were generous to forgive
Their debts in that fast.
The Ninevites gave alms,
Let us desist from oppressions;[r]
The Ninevites set their slaves at liberty,
Do you have pity on freemen.

Now inasmuch as Jonah was sent
To that city full of crimes,
Justice armed him with severity ;[s]
She commissioned him with words of terror ;
She gave him a stern decree[t] against the city.
With searching medicines[u]
He was sent, a terrible physician,
To a state abounding in evil deeds.
He opened and displayed his medicines—
They were terrible and penetrating.
For Grace on this condition
Had commissioned the Prophet—
Not that the city should be destroyed,
But should be saved when penitent ;[v]
Yet the preacher did not give counsel
To the citizens, that they should repent ;
For he would shew that whoever is afflicted
Should be anxious respecting his health ;
He held the door before them,
To indicate how they should knock at it.

Jonah preached a sentence of doom ;
They assented to and approved it ;
That it might be seen how powerful
Was repentance, to obtain conciliation ;
And how strong was a penitent man
Who could obtain mercy by importunity.[w]
For the malady was one of sin,
Of the free will and not of necessity.
A voice of terror made them fear,

Like the appearance of a *drawn* sword.
That the presumptuous by terror
Might be cured of his folly,
This physician, who went that he might heal,
Displayed the sword to his patient;
The city saw it and was alarmed.
Like an executioner he rose up,
The sick fell prostrate through fear;
They arose and hasted to repentance.
The voice of Jonah, like a sword,
Decreed the pains of torture;
He was a physician whose rod healed
More than the medicine of other men.
A physician heals by blandishments;
Jonah healed by preaching.
This healer whose visitation
Inflicted terror upon his patients,[x]
By administering rebuke sharply
Wisely accomplished a cure.
The sick man left his bed
When he looked upon the rod of wrath;
Those became healthy who were sick
With the distemper of their lusts.
Every man rebuked his concupiscence,
Having become a physician to himself.

The feast of the kings ceased,
And the banquet of the princes.
If sucking children fasted from their milk,
Who would order a convivial meal?

They made the beasts abstain from water,
Who then would drink wine?
If the king clothed himself with sackcloth,
Who would put on his robes?
If unchaste women became holy,
Who would contemplate marriage?
If the jovial were made to tremble,
Who would indulge in laughter?
If those who were merry wept,
To whom could folly be pleasing?
If robbers became righteous,
Who could defraud his companion?
If the city was altogether shaken,
Who would protect his own home?

Throw away the gold
And no man will steal it;
Lay open the treasure
And none will violently enter it.
The gay laid restraint upon their eyes,
That they might not gaze on women;
Women laid aside their ornaments,
That those who looked on them might not stumble.
For they were persuaded of this,
That the ruin was a common one;
If they became a stumbling-block to others,
They themselves would not escape.
The beautiful would not disturb
The penitence of the men of the city;

For they knew that on their behalf
The repentant were mourning.
They thus both healed and were healed,
The one by the other, through repentance.

No one caused his neighbour to sin,
For every man was persecuting unrighteousness;
Every one drew on his companion
To prayer and supplication.
The whole city became one body,
Every one was watching every one,
Lest one should sin against his kinsman.
Each one instructed his neighbour,
That he might be clear from his fellow-member.
No man there offered up petitions,
That he might alone be saved;
They were alike as fellow-members,
For each prayed the one for the other.
All the city had been summoned
To destruction, as though it were one body.
Nor were the sober among them able
To live apart from sinners;
For as members they were bound together,
The good and the evil equally.
Their righteous men were offering prayers
For sinners, that they might be saved;
And sinners again were intreating
For the righteous, that they might be heard.
The just among them prayed

For the unrighteous, that they might be saved;
And the unjust, on the other hand, made supplication
That the prayer of the just might be accepted.

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a "The whole city."—Sy., *made the city to fear* ܥܒܕ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ *from its end* or *boundary*. The form is not given in the Lexicons. It occurs again in verse 143 of this Part.

b "His mouth spake."—Or, *he filled his mouth*, for there is room for doubt as to the meaning of ܡܠܠ in this passage. Castell and Schaaf give to it the explanation, *locutus est*, but always in the phrase, ܡܠܠ ܥܠ ܠܒܐ *he spake to the heart*, i.e., *he comforted*. Michaelis supposes that this word was confounded with ܡܠܠ in the early history of the written language. Benedict renders, "*Os suum minis implevit.*"

c "Delivered its doom."—Sy., *gave Woe to it;* not the noun but the interjection ܘܝ.

d "The feeble herald."—The Sy. ܟܪܝܙܐ which we have generally rendered *preacher*, is of as wide signification as the Greek κήρυξ, *a public messenger*, or *herald;* this should be remembered, although we have more often used the more technical term, *preacher*.

e "In a city."—This is a clear example of the use of ܒܪ as the indefinite article; a usage not defined in the Lexicons. It is possible Ephraem chose the word for the sake of the metre, but certainly he could not have used it in its ordinary sense of *one*.

f "Mighty men."—Sy., ܓܒܪܐ the word used in Gen. vi. 4 for the Hebrew הַגִּבֹּרִים *men of renown*. Benedict, *in urbe gigantum*.

g "The cup of wrath."—The ܟܣ ܪܓܙܐ is the expression employed in the *Peschito* for the Hebrew כּוֹס חֵמָה (Isa. li. 17, 22). "The cup of trembling" is the rendering of a different word in both languages.

h "Who had lent to others."—Sy., ܡܪܝ ܕܝܢܐ *masters of a debt*.

i "And gave their bills as alms."—Benedict, "*Audierunt creditores, conscissisque syngraphis, in opera misericordiæ incubuerunt.* The word rendered *bills* is ܐܓܪ̈ܐ which Castell renders *syngrapha* on the authority of Bar Bahlul. But under the root ܓܪ an illustration is given from the New Testament (Col. ii. 14), *the bill of our debts.* But the word there is ܟܬܒܐ. Bernstein gives examples of the form in our text with the ܐ *prosthetic.* The Syriac is, literally, *with their bills they wrought righteousness*, i. e., *alms*, as in Matt. vi. 1.

j "Debtors heard him."—Sy., ܫܡܥ, *mutuum accipientes*, Castell. Benedict renders *fœneratores*, which would require ܡܫܡܥܢ as in Isa. xxiv. 2.

k "So as not to deny their obligation."—Literally, *that they should not rise up against their debt.* Benedict, led apparently by the error noticed in the last note, translates, "*Obedierunt fœneratores ne ultra sortem exigerent.*"

l "Creditors."—Neither of the words used before is here employed, but ܒܥܝ̈ ܫܐܠܬܐ, either *the makers*, or *the visitors*, or *enquirers* of a debt; the latter appearing more suitable to the idea of a creditor.

m "How each should gain his soul."—Probably an allusion to Matt. xvi. 26, although the word we have rendered *gain* is not employed there. Ephraem uses ܣܚܪ *to trade with, use as merchandise*, as suggested by the preceding verses.

n "For each one judged himself."—This verse is the same as the thirty-fifth just above, and is an instance of tautology leading us to suspect some error of a copyist.

o "When haughty women put on humility."—This is a severe remark of Ephraem, but it is borne out by the general rule of human nature, that vices put on their worst form when they appear in the gentler sex. The allusion is also to the laying aside personal ornaments; a proceeding indicating some powerful motive, when the passion of the women of the East for rich dress is considered.—See *Hymns and Homilies*, p. 37, two last stanzas.

p "*When compared with that repentance.*"—Sy., *in the eyes of.*

This passage proves that this piece was composed for a special occasion.—See Introduction.

q "The outward form."—ܙܘܬ̈ܐ, the word employed by the *Peschito* for the Greek *μόρφωσις* in Rom. ii. 20, "Which hast the *form* of knowledge and of the truth in the law."

r "Oppressions."—Sy., ܐܢܚܬܐ from ܐܢܚ *suspiravit ex angustiâ*, as the Heb., אֲנָק. As the constant sense is *groaning*, the word must be used here by a metonymy of the cause for the effect. Benedict, *oppressionibus pauperum*. Perhaps the Syriac is the same as the Greek *ἀνάγκη*, *force*, *violence*, *bonds*, &c.

s "Justice armed him with severity."—Sy., ܙܕܩܬܐ ܗܘ ܠܒܫܗ ܚܪܝܢܐ, which at first sight would be rendered, *Justice justified, or made him righteous*, which will not suit the context. Although the sense, *made vigorously just or severe*, is not sustained by any example we can find, either in Syriac or the cognate languages, we think such must be the meaning here. Benedict has, "*Justitia dura illum severitate munivit.*"

t "A stern decree."—ܓܙܪܐ from ܓܙܪ *abscidit*, conveying the idea of fixedness and irrevocability.

u "With searching medicines."—ܒܡܫܚܠ, rendered *searching*, is the translation of the *Peschito* for *τομώτερος* in Heb. iv. 12. It is also used for a *sharp* decree, a *sharp* fever, etc.

v "But should be saved when penitent."—We have supplied this line to fill up an ellipsis in the original, which looks more like an omission of a verse by accident than a genuine figure of speech. Benedict supplies, *ut laborantem curaret.* The suspicion of an error is confirmed by the division of the printed text containing an odd number of verses, contrary to the rule.

w "By importunity."—An apparent allusion to Luke xviii. 1.

x "Inflicted terror upon his patients."—This and the three following verses are somewhat in different order from the Syriac, whose terse intricacy we tried in vain to render in order, line by line.

Part the Second.

THE TERROR AND LAMENTATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS CAUSED BY THE MESSAGE OF JONAH.—THEIR PARENTS TRY TO COMFORT THEM.—THEY ACT AS ABRAHAM DID WHEN SOOTHING THE FEARS OF ISAAC.—THEY HOLD OUT HOPE TO THEIR LITTLE ONES BUT CANNOT THEMSELVES ENTERTAIN IT.

THE gentle wailing of the little ones,
Caused the whole city to shed tears;
The voice of children as it rose up,
Affected the heart with pity.[a]
Old men sprinkled themselves with ashes;
Aged women plucked and threw away
Their grey hairs,[b] which were their honour,
Putting upon themselves degrading suffering.
When the youths looked upon their old men,
They wailed louder in their anguish;
Aged men wept for the youths,
The fair supports of their old age.
They mourned that they should be buried together,
The buriers and those about to be interred.[c]
The heads of chaste men and women,[d]
Became bald through their mourning.[e]

The mother rose up in the midst,
And her beloved ones surrounded her,
Clinging to the borders of her garment,
That she might save them from death.
The young child, at the sound of the earthquake,[f]
Fled for refuge to his mother's breast;
And in the bosom of its nurse,
The suckling hid itself with terror.
Day dawned, it became night, and they numbered
The days which every hour shortened;
As the days departed they counted them;
And as each day ended they groaned aloud,
Because it was subtracted from their life.
For with the day as it declined,
Their breath also was departing.[g]

The children enquired, while weeping,
Of their fathers, in the midst of their tears:
"Narrate to us, O parents,
How many days yet remain
From the time which that Hebrew preacher
Hath determined for us?
And what hour he hath indicated,
When we shall go down below to Sheol?[h]
And in what day will it be
That this fair city shall be destroyed?
And, further, when will the last day be
After which we shall not exist?
When will the season arrive
When mortal pangs[i] shall seize on all of us?

And when throughout the world
Shall fly the tidings of our ruin?
And the passing spectators shall gaze upon
The city overthrown upon its masters?"

When the parents listened to these things
From the mouth of their little ones,
Their tears most bitterly
Overflowed and suffused their children,
And dropped, at the same time, on the persons
Of the speakers and the hearers.
And the fathers were not able
To find utterance through sighing;
For their grief had closed up
The straight path of words;[k]
And their speech was interrupted
By the weeping of their beloved ones.

Lest, therefore, the fathers should increase
The torment of their children,
And before the day decreed
They should die of sorrow;
The fathers checked their tears,
And fought with, and restrained[l], their tenderness,
That they might wisely console
The young ones[m] respecting their enquiry.
For the fathers were afraid
To reveal the truth to their children,
That the coming day was nigh at hand,
According to the declaration of the prophet.

Like Abraham then, with a prophecy,
They comforted their children.

For Isaac enquired concerning the sacrifice,
"Where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"[n]
Lest he should return an answer with a groan,
And there should be a[o] blemish in his offering,
He soothed while he bound his firstborn,
Until his knife was unsheathed.
For Abraham, in regard to his son,
Saw that the question was too hard for him;
Yet he did not use silence,
Lest he should make his son sorrowful;
Neither did he disclose[p] his own suffering,
Lest the offering should be saddened.
Abraham deliberated with himself
How he might satisfy his beloved one;
While avoiding plain discoveries,
He prophesied a hidden mystery;
And while seeking not to reveal the truth,
He plainly declared it to him.
He feared to tell him, "Thou art it!"
He prophesied that there was another.
He thought that he was *the sacrifice;*
He at the same prophesied that he was not.
For the tongue of Abraham
Was more knowing than his heart,
His mouth *before* took lesson from his heart,
His heart *now* learned from it.[q]
His wise intellect was quiet,

His tongue became a prophet;
And his intellect which possessed wisdom,
Was made wiser by the tongue.
"I and the lad will go up,"[r]
Said Abraham to his young men,
"And we will return again to you."
He thought to deceive, and he prophesied.
Yet he did not become a liar,
For he contended for the truth;
His speech became prophetic,
While he thought to help *Isaac*.[s]

Thus also the Ninevites acted,
While studying to satisfy their children.
They proceeded, in the midst of weeping,
To speak[t] in this manner to their beloved ones:—
"God is good and gracious,
And will not destroy the image he hath made.
A painter who designs a picture,[u]
Preserveth it with care;
How much rather will the Good protect
His living and rational image!
My children, the city shall not be ruined,
Nor shall the state be overthrown.
By the threatenings of perdition
He calls us to repentance,
And by this fierce indignation,
Would convert us to holiness.
For you, beloved children,
Have ofttimes been chastened by us;

Ye have even been scourged and have borne it,
And have been made wise when punished.
For the rod was not lifted up
In anger, to destroy you;
We corrected because ye acted foolishly,
And we rejoiced because ye were reformed.
Even ye yourselves acknowledged
That in love ye had been afflicted.
Even ye yourselves perceived
That in tender pity ye were chastened.
From the correction ye derived benefit,
And became richer[v] through it.
The sorrow, because ye endured stripes,
Became a source of great joy;
And the endurance of the rod
Proved a treasury of sweetness.
Your anguish was changed,
And became altogether pleasant.

"Learn then, O beloved ones,
From your experience of punishment;
And acknowledge, from the rod
Applied in wisdom by your parents,
That the Father who wisely deals with us,
Is correcting us for our welfare.
His rod is lifted up in terror,
That we may tremble and obtain wisdom.
For as we, who are fathers,
Instructed you with rebuke,
That we might improve and gain you—

That we might make you suffer and do you good—
So He, the Good and Gracious
Teaches by His reproof,[w]
That by His goodness we may save us,
And abundantly bestow the treasure of His mercy.
By His rod He makes known to us His love;
By His stroke He opens His treasure to us.
If this is true regarding yourselves,
That from love to you we inflicted stripes,
How can we think, respecting God,
That He does not correct us in kindness?
Let then this correction on our part,
Be to you as a mirror;
In which you may view this chastisement
Of Grace and Goodness.
For all this our love to you,
Is not so great, beloved ones,
As is the love of God
In His Grace to the children of men.
Our love to you is little,
Compared with His love to us;
And though His chastisement is severe,
His goodness far exceeds it;
For His chastisement is administered
As a gift to the children of men.

"Be comforted, ye mourning children,
And desist a little from your tears;
Soon the earthquake will leave us,
And the fierce anger will pass from us;

The city will soon be consoled,
It will quickly exhibit gladness;
And the Chastiser will rejoice as He sees
That you, His children, are reformed."

Such things as these the Ninevites
Made mention of to their loved ones;
And while desiring to console,
They prophesied concerning peace.
Because their repentance was speedy,[x]
They predicted like true *prophets;*
Their repentance was in deed,
Their prophecy was in truth.
But although they said these things,
They desisted not from weeping;
And although they thus administered consolation,
They did not cease from mourning.
Danger disposed them more to fasting,
And fright led them to prayer.
For they prudently considered,
That if the righteous did not desist *from grief,*
How much ought sinners to mourn,
When destruction was standing at the door!

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a "Affected the heart with pity."—The Syriac is a strong orientalism, *turned the heart and the bowels;* scarcely admitting an exact rendering in English.

b "Their grey hairs."—ܫܝܒܘܬܐ, the adjective *white*, is here used

in the plural, without a noun, for *canities, the hoary head.* The *Peschito* used the same form in Isa xlvii. 2.

c "The buriers and those about to be interred."—This is an excellent example of terse description, conveying an affecting sentiment in the fewest possible words. The old men, who in the ordinary course of things would be carried to the tomb by their sons, and who, like Joseph, would wish on the bed of death to *give commandment concerning their bones*, now saw a præternatural doom impending; young and old together were to descend into the same yawning grave!

d "The heads of chaste men and women."—This is a passage of some difficulty, and we are obliged to leave it *sub judice.* The Syriac is ܒܬܘܠ̈ܐ ܘܒܬܘܠ̈ܬ̈ܐ, from the adjective ܒܬܘܠ, to which Castell gives the meanings, *verecundus, sobrius, castus, continens, temperans.* Michaelis, in a note to Castell, says, "*Ab ecclesiasticis scriptoribus ut epitheton monachi poni solet;*" the word was used as an epithet of a monk. Perhaps Ephraem merely meant, that modest and reputable men and women, not accustomed to court the public eye, now displayed their heads denuded of the hair through their deep grief; but we feel doubtful whether more than this is not intended. Benedict, according to his subjective Romanism, translates, "*Casti castæque cœlibes,*" *chaste monks and nuns;* or, not to strain his words too much, *chaste single persons of both sexes.* It is certainly possible that Ephraem, clothing the past with the ideas of the present, may have committed the anachronism of supposing monastic institutions at Nineveh in the days of Jonah, as a great Italian painter introduces Dominican friars and other mediæval paraphernalia in a picture of the prodigal son. It should be mentioned that ܒܬܘܠ, rendered *sober*, occurs in verse 178 of Part I. and from the connection may admit of an ascetic idea.—See *Metrical Hymns*, &c., p. 108, note *b.*

e "Became bald through their mourning."—The Sy., ܐܬܩܪܚ from ܩܪܚ, *depilavit*, is used several times in the *Peschito* for the Heb. קָרְחָה (which Michaelis thinks is the same as the Syriac word, the ح and ר being interchanged), and, like that, designates the artificial baldness inflicted on themselves by the Orientals as a

token of grief. *(Calvitium in occipite quale sibi tondere solebant lugentes.* Gesenius.) See Isa. xxii. 12.

f "The earthquake."—From this passage, and a similar one at verse 188 of this Part, it appears that Ephraem presumed that the preaching of Jonah was corroborated by miracles. The marvellous and altogether unparalleled effects of his mission seem to demand such a presumption.

g "Their breath also was departing."—A particle is here found, ܚܠܨ, often used in the later Syriac, but, as Michaelis says, not employed in the biblical usage. An excellent article on it is given by Bernstein. Michaelis remarks (in Castell), "*Est particula sæpe redundans, quam nos aliquando per* nempe *exprimere possumus.*" We have rendered it by *also;* perhaps *even so* would be as proper. Benedict has *pariter.*

h "Sheol."—We prefer leaving this word untranslated to deciding what idea Ephraem intended to convey. The word we have rendered *below* is ܠܥܡܩ̈ܐ. Benedict seems to have derived it from ܫܪܐ *to live*, for he renders the verse, "*Quando* viventes *in infernum descendemus.*"

i "Mortal pangs."—Sy., ܚܒܠܐ, used by the *Peschito* in Isaiah xiii. 8 and xxi. 3 for the Heb. צִירִים *tormenta parturientium.* Benedict translates, "*Quonam tempore operiet nos caligo;*" but the word will not admit the idea of *darkness*, as Michaelis shews in Castell. It occurs again in verse 25, Part III., *the pangs of death*, which Benedict has allowed to slip out altogether from his translation.

k "The straight path of words."—Sy., ܫܦܝܪ is *level, straight, plain*, and well expresses the ease with which words are uttered when their passage is not interrupted by grief.

l "Restrained their tenderness."—The idea of *repression and restraint* is certainly conveyed here by the Sy. ܐܣܪ, although no such meaning is found in the Lexicons. It seems allied to the Heb. אָלָה, which, in Hiphil, is "*jurejurando adstrinxit eum;*" Benedict, "*internos affectus represserunt.*"

m "The young ones."—The Syriac is ܥܘܠܡܐ, *boyhood* or *childhood.*

n "Where is the lamb for the burnt-offering?"—Gen. xxii. 7. This extract, and all the terms used in this place in reference to the sacrifice of Isaac, are literally the same as those found in the *Peschito.*

o "Lest there should be a blemish."—Referring to the prevalent idea, that a sacrifice should not go unwillingly to the altar. The same thought is beautifully expressed in the *Hymns and Homilies*, p. 2.

p "Disclose."—Sy., ܓܠܐ. This meaning is not given in Castell, except so far as it may be deduced from the general sense of the word, which is, *to explain, interpret*, and thus *to disclose what was hidden.* Bernstein gives the signification among others, *declaravit.*

q "His heart now learned from it."—Abraham uttered something at random, and without the clear concurrence of his judgment, since he did not expect the divine interference which actually occurred. His tongue is thus said to have been wiser than his heart (or mind) and to have learned from it.

r "I and the lad will go up."—Unlike the quotation above, this from Gen. xxii. 5, differs greatly from the *Peschito* in the words employed.

s "While he thought to help Isaac."—The thought condensed in the few verses in reference to Abraham, furnishes an admirable example of the flexibility of the Syriac and of the skill of Ephraem. The passage also illustrates the way in which Scripture was used by the early fathers, as supplying images and similitudes in their ordinary compositions.

t "To speak."—The verbs ܐܡܪ ܠܡܡܪ furnish an unusual combination of the infinitive with the indicative. The ܐܡܪ is plainly expletive.

u "A picture."—Picture and image are renderings of the same Syriac word, ܕܡܘܬܐ.

v "And became richer."—Sy., *became heirs;* inherited something they did not before possess.

w "Teaches by his reproof."—The Latin version of this and the five previous verses, will give a good idea of the best style of Benedict:—"*Scilicet quemadmodum vestri vos parentes verbo et verbere castigavimus, dum vos erudire et lucrari studeremus, et modicum passos admodum juvare; sic et ille Optimus et Mitissimus nos arguit et erudit.*" It will be seen how comparatively easy our task would have been if we could have allowed ourselves to express thus freely the terse thoughts of the Syriac. The *modicum* and *admodum*, for instance, introduced into the 161st verse, have nothing, in the original, to warrant their use.

x "Because their repentance was speedy."—We have rendered ܒܥܓܠ by its usual meaning—*speedy*, but confess the sense of the passage is not very clear to us. Benedict translates, "*Et quia* citra *modum resipuerunt* citra *errorem futura prædixerunt.*"

Part the Third.

THE KING COMES FORTH TO THE PEOPLE WEEPING AND CLOTHED WITH SACKCLOTH.—A DESCRIPTION OF THE MISERY OF THE CITY.—THE KING ADDRESSES HIS ARMIES AND GIVES THEM HIS COUNSEL.—HE REFERS TO GOD'S GOVERNMENT OF THE WORLD, THAT HE IS MERCIFUL AS WELL AS JUST, AND SUGGESTS REPENTANCE.—HE ILLUSTRATES HIS ADVICE BY THE CASE OF THE FLOOD IN THE DAYS OF NOAH.—A DESCRIPTION OF THAT EVENT.

THE King came forth and shewed himself,[a]
The city was moved when it saw his sackcloth;
What noble then hesitated[b]
Whether he should put off his fine linen?
Even the king wept when he saw
That the whole city was mourning.
The city wept before the King,
When it saw the ashes on his head;
The King wept in the presence of the city,
Because it had become black with sackcloth.
The whole city shed tears,
And excited the stones of the wall[c] to weep.
Whoever prayed in this manner?
Whoever thus made supplication?

Whoever became so lowly?
Whoever to this degree humbled himself?[d]
Whoever thus cast off his abominations,
Both the secret and the known ones?
Whoever thus threw from him,
His pleasures as though they were his members?[e]
Whoever at the sound of a voice alone,[f]
Thus broke his heart for his sins?
Whoever, listening to a word of mouth,
Became thus agitated[g] in his conscience?
Whoever at the voice of a feeble man,
Was thus seized with mortal agonies?
Whoever thus, by repentance,
Pictured[h] God before his eyes?
Whoever thus saw the Just One,
Unsheathing his hidden sword?

One might then see that great city
Thus given up to sighs and weeping.
Who was there able to endure
The plaintive voice of children,
Who, loving a long life,
Had heard that their days were cut off?
Who, further, could contain himself
To hear the groaning of the aged men?
For those desiring the grave,[i] and those who should bury them,
Had heard that the city should be overthrown.
Who was able to endure
The great weeping of the young men,

Who, while anticipating their nuptials,
Were invited, as guests, to their deaths?
Who was able to endure
The weeping voice of the brides,
Who, when sitting in their bridal chambers,
Were invited to the depths of the earth?
Who could refrain from tears,
Before the King who was weeping?
Who, instead of his royal palace,
Was invited to descend to Sheol;
And who, now King among the living,
Should be but dust among the dead;
Who, in place of his chariot of state,
Had heard that his city should be overwhelmed;
In place of his delicacies and pleasures,
It was reported that death should swallow him up;
And, instead of his couch of ease,
Both the city and its King, suddenly,
Were invited to the abyss of wrath!

The King convoked his armies,
He wept with them and they with him.
The King rehearsed in their presence
The battles in which they had been crowned;
He also brought to their remembrance
In what perils they had conquered.
But now his soul was feeble, and he was humbled,
For there was none to redeem nor help.
He began thus to address them:—
"This, my friends, is not a war

That we can go forth and conquer as we have been
wont,
And triumph according to our pleasure;
For even heroes are now trembling
At the mighty rumour which is proclaimed abroad.
One Hebrew now conquers us —
Who have conquered many:
He hath made kings, even us, to tremble;
And his word hath greatly disturbed us.
We have overthrown many cities,
But in our own city he vanquishes us.
Nineveh, the mother of heroes,
Is afraid of a solitary feeble one. —
The lioness in her lair
Trembles at the Hebrew.
Asshur[j] has roared against the world,[k]
But the voice of Jonah roars against her.
Behold! the race of Nimrod—the mighty one—
Is altogether brought low!"

The King offered good advice
To his mighty hosts:
"I counsel you, my beloved friends,
That even now ye be not cast down;
Let us contend like the brave,
That we perish not as men of no spirit.
For whoever, when he is tried,
Taketh heart and acts with courage:
If he dies, it is as a hero,
If he lives, it is as a conqueror.

Thus, death being one of renown *to him,*
And on the other hand, life being illustrious,
The magnanimous, through his bravery,
Earns two advantages.
Even as the faint-hearted
Gains a double evil;
For his death is altogether ignominious,
And his life inglorious.
Let us then be armed and brave;
Let us act like men and become renowned.
For although we should not gain our purpose,
We shall have the fame of men of courage.

"It hath been reported to us by tradition,'
Which came of old time from our fathers,
That there is righteousness with God,
But that His property also is goodness;
And that by His justice He threatens,
And by His goodness He has pity.
Let us therefore placate His justice,
And His goodness will favourably regard us.
For if His justice is reconciled,
His goodness will afford us aid.
Let His righteousness be placated,
And His loving-kindness will abound to all men.
But even if His justice is indignant,
Our prayer will not be blamed;
Although it is not appeased,
Our supplication will not be complained of.
Between justice and goodness,

Repentance will not be spurned.
Let us then fabricate a new weapon, –
For a new city,[m] my beloved;
Since a secret war calls upon us,
Let us take to ourselves hidden weapons.

"This hath been told us, by those of old time,
Who have proclaimed the truth in the world,
Whose words have descended by tradition,
And the rumours of their renowned deeds—
(For the human race is not deprived
Of a knowing discretion,)
The fame hath walked through the earth,
Of just men who have been delivered in this manner;
It hath also filled the world
That the foolish shall be condemned.
We have also heard of the unjust,
How they, acting daringly, have been destroyed.
And we may see as in a mirror,[n]
That the presumptuous shall be rebuked.
A standard is set up in the earth
That the spectators may contemplate it.
Goodness,[o] further, has been published to us,
That those who hear may look upon it;
And repentance is pictured in the earth
That sinners may view it.

"Who is there, my friends, who is not acquainted[p]
With the overwhelming deluge?
The history is familiar to us

Of the inundation in the days of Noah;
When, by the breaking forth of justice,[q]
The whole human race was drowned.[r]
Then, no one was deprived of discretion,
And no one was blinded as to knowledge.
My sons, the wicked were condemned,
That generation in the days of Noah.
Even then a voice made proclamation
Concerning the flood which was coming.
The ungodly who heard it, provoked to wrath,
They treated that voice with derision.
The sound of the axe and the hammer,
Preached respecting that deluge;
The noise of the saw in its sawing,
Cried aloud of the inundation.
They derided the voice of the axe,
They mocked at the voice of the hammer,
Till the ark being completed,
Then justice was revealed;[s]
And justice being revealed
Presumption was condemned.
The fountains were opened and roared
Against the wicked mockers.
Suddenly the flood cried out
Against the ungodly who had derided.
Those who scoffed at the sound of the axe
Were tormented with the voice of thunders;
Those who laughed at the sound of the saw
Were blinded by earthquakes and lightnings!
They began to hasten to the ark,

At which they had once mocked;
Its door was shut in their faces
For they had derided its building."

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a "The king came forth and shewed himself."—This is probably intended by Ephraem as a remarkable result of Jonah's preaching, since the kings of most eastern countries maintain a cautious reserve with their subjects, and are generally secluded from them.

b "What noble then hesitated."—The Sy., ܕܚܠ is *to fear*, *to terrify*; but here it has the meaning of *to doubt*, *hesitate*, like the *vereor ne* of the Latins.

c "The stones of the wall."—The same figure is employed in Hab. ii. 11: "For the stone shall cry out of the wall," etc., and the same Syriac words are used in the *Peschito*.

d "Whoever to this degree humbled himself?"—This and the former verse are omitted by Benedict; a fault of no uncommon occurrence in this piece. He appears to have aimed more at giving a poetical rotundity to his Latin, than at faithfully rendering the words of the Syriac text.

e "As though they were his members."—The reference is to the command of our Lord in Matt. v. 30. The meaning appears to be,—*he laid aside his lusts, although it cost him as much pain as the abscision of a member of his body.*

f "At the sound of a voice alone."—That is, *of Jonah*. It is taken for granted by Ephraem, that the preaching of Jonah was confined to the few words attributed to him in the Scriptures, "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown!"

g "Thus agitated in his conscience."—The Sy., ܐܬܢܩܕ is used in Acts ii. 37, for the Greek κατενύγησαν, *were pricked in their heart*. Michaelis, in Castell, has a note intimating that the word had not occurred to him anywhere but in the Scriptures, and he

doubts respecting the real meaning, but inclines to that of *being moved or agitated.*

h "Pictured God before his eyes."—The Sy., ܣܓ is used in the same sense in Gal. iii. 1, and that text was, no doubt, in the mind of Ephraem. In both cases a vivid perception of God or Christ, as though actually present, is said to produce repentance and faith.

i "Those desiring the grave."—A sense of the great importance of the rites of sepulture is conveyed frequently by Ephraem in the manner now before us. It was an element of the misery of old men, in the threatened destruction of Nineveh, that there should be none to bury them. The days having arrived to them, in which, from the decay of their powers they could find no pleasure, they could even *desire the grave*, were it but accompanied with its customary solemnities.

j "Asshur."—Sy., ܐܬܘܪ *Athoor*. This word is taken from the Hebrew of Gen. x. 11, אַשּׁוּר, treated as the name of a man by the English version; but it more properly signifies the region in which Nineveh and other towns were situated. Gesenius says of it in reference to this place in Genesis, "*Assyria vetus et propria easdem fere regiones comprehendisse videtur, quas Assyriæ propriæ tribuit Ptolemæus.*" In Syrian church literature *Athoor* is the name of Mosul, on the bank of the Tigris opposite to Nineveh; but it also designates a metropolitan see, including Mosul, Nineveh, and other towns. Ephraem appears to have used it in this large sense, for the region of which Nineveh was the capital. In a letter sent from Mosul to the Pope in the year 1552, by a Nestorian, is the sentence, "*Mozal, hoc est Attur, in vicinia Nineves.*" (Assemani *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, vol. i., p. 526.) Mr. Badger, in his interesting work, *The Nestorians and their Rituals*, says on this subject, "In many Syriac MSS. Mosul is styled *Athoor*, and it is not an uncommon practice with ecclesiastical writers of the present day to use the same phraseology, '*Mosul, which is Athoor;*' but this must be regarded rather as a traditional commemoration of the title of one of the oldest dioceses in these parts (which was also called 'Nineveh' long

after that name had ceased to denote the capital of the Assyrian kings) than as the common appellative of a particular town then existing." (Vol. i., p. 78.)

k "The world."—Syr., ܒܪܝܬܐ from ܒܪܐ *creavit, the creature*, like the New Testament, *κτίσις*.

l "By tradition."—Sy., ܣܘܪܣܐ *deductio, derivatio, series, traditio;* Castell.

m "A new city."—This is at first sight obscure, but the meaning seems to be as follows:—The Ninevites were brought into an entirely new position, in which their former prowess availed them nothing. The king says in verse 72, above,

> "This, my friends, is not a war
> That we can go forth and conquer as we have been wont,
> And triumph according to our pleasure."

It remained, then, that new circumstances demanded new resources, and he says, "Let us devise a new weapon (repentance) for a new state of things;" here figuratively called *a city*.

n "May see as in a mirror."—Literally, *a mirror also is placed.*

o "Goodness."—The text here has ܛܝܒܘܬܐ *goodness*, but Benedict has *pœnitentia*, as though he read ܬܘܒܬܐ. But this produces a tautology, which we have avoided by considering the text as the correct reading. Divine goodness and man's repentance together form a ground of hope for the sinner.

p "Who is not acquainted."—The Syriac word is ܐܝܕܥ construed with ܠ, a form on which some observations are made in the *Hymns and Homilies*, p. 180, note *h*. But the sense here is somewhat different, and is not noticed in the Lexicons. Benedict, "*Cuinam ignotus est Cataclysmus?*"

q "The breaking forth of justice."—The only meaning given in the Lexicons to ܐܬܪܥܝܬܐ is *vicinia;* but the verb ܐܬܪܥ is *descendere fecit;* hence *a coming down, breaking forth*, in allusion to the descent of the water-floods from heaven, is properly the meaning of the noun.

r "Was drowned."—The printed text, ܐܬܡܟ, is plainly an error for ܐܬܡܟ, the word generally appropriated to baptism.

s "Then justice was revealed."—The particle ⟵ *afterwards, then*, is not of common occurrence.

In his *Commentary on Genesis* (vol. i. of the Roman edition of his Syriac works), Ephraem uses many interesting illustrations, to magnify the mercy and forbearance of God towards the guilty antediluvians. The following extract will interest our readers:—"When therefore the men of that generation were reformed, neither by the congregation of the animals at one time, nor by the agreement which existed between creatures of opposite natures, the Lord said to Noah, 'There are yet seven days and I will blot out all flesh which I have made.' He then who had given them a hundred years while the ark was preparing, and yet they repented not; and who gathered the creatures which they had never seen, and which had no concord between them, and put a covenant of peace between the tame and the savage, so that the former feared not: yet further, after Noah and all flesh had entered into the ark, the Spirit extended to them seven days, during which the door of the ark remained open to them, and they saw this wonderful thing, that the lions did not require their wild gambols, nor the other beasts and birds their accustomed practices. Yet were they not even then persuaded to leave off their evil deeds."

The above breathes a tender and truly Christ-like spirit. It is remarkable that the *Peschito*, in the reference to the flood in 1 Peter iii. 20, to the words, *when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah*, adds, *in the hope of their repentance.* This would probably be the authority on which Ephraem would rest his beautiful amplifications of the divine forbearance.

We will add another short extract from this Commentary, as it is very little known:—

"The forbearance of God for one hundred and twenty years, was intended, first, that they should repent. Further, that holy men might remain among them, and that thus their conduct might condemn them. Also, that the righteous might fill up their appointed days and die, lest men should say with regard to those who were not guilty, Why did He not spare them? Thus when the trial of that generation had lasted one hundred

years, He cut off the twenty years. For the seven days which He granted to them after the animals had entered the ark, were more in value than the twenty years which He took away, because of the marvellous events which took place in them. For if they would not repent after the signs of the seven days, it is plain they would not after the signs of the twenty years which were cut off. He thus sent them to death less burdened with many offences, by cutting off from their life twenty years." (*Ephraemi Opera*, vol. iv., p. 53.)

From this passage it appears, 1. That Ephraem thought that the text (Gen. v. 32,) "Noah was five hundred years old," was the date of the divine threatening in the first instance; and 2. That he interpreted Gen. vi. 3, "his days shall be a hundred and twenty years," not of the shortening of human life in general, but of the time which was to intervene between the five hundredth year of Noah and the actual infliction of the flood. Compare Gen. vii. 6.

Part the Fourth.

THE KING RELATES HIS INTERVIEW WITH JONAH, HIS CONTEMPT BOTH OF THREATENINGS AND PROMISES.—HE COMPARES THE PROPHET TO A FAITHFUL PHYSICIAN WHO PRESCRIBES PAINFUL REMEDIES, AND CONTRASTS HIM WITH THOSE WHO PREDICT GOOD THINGS FOR THE SAKE OF GAIN.—HE SUGGESTS FASTING AND PRAYER.—HE REFERS TO THE TEMPTATION OF JOB BY SATAN, AND EXHORTS TO A GENERAL AND ENTIRE HUMILIATION.

"My Brethren! let us not despise
The voice of Jonah the Hebrew.
It does not become us, foolishly,
To look down upon[a] his preaching;
Let us rather consider it discreetly,
And view it on all sides.
I have fallen into great perplexity,
From the words of his proclamation.
It may be thought to be audacity—
It may be considered as madness—
But if one should call him mad,
He is yet a treasure of great wisdom.[b]
In him there is perception[c] and intellect,

Intelligence springs up in him as a fountain.
His appearance is contemptible and unadorned,[d]
But his speech is powerful and weighty.
I have questioned him in your presence,
Making such enquiries as we thought fit;
As though tried in the furnace,
Were the words spoken by him.
But he neither trembled nor feared,
He neither hesitated nor displayed agitation.
He varied not the word of his mouth,
Which was restricted by the truth.
He departed not from his narration,
For very tenacious is his memory.

"I flattered[e] him but he was not enticed,[f]
I sought to terrify him, but he trembled not;
I shewed him riches, but he laughed at them,
A sword also, but he altogether despised it;
He was a stranger[g] to the sword,
He was superior to a gift.
There are some who will be allured by a treasure,
While others will tremble at a sword;
But to him punishment had no terror,
Nor a gift any attractions.
Between flattery and fear[h]
We placed this Hebrew;
But he escaped from both of them,
For both of them he despised.
I shewed him wealth, he laughed it to scorn,
And on the sword he looked contemptuously.[i]

The love of money[j] was conquered by him,
The fear of death was despised.
Every word which he uttered,
Cleft the stone by its sword.[k]
He neither feared my power,
Nor respected[l] my majesty.
All our honour was considered by him,
As filth thrown upon the ground;
So greatly did he scorn our wealth,
So much did he despise our sword.
He prepared a brow of brass,
And thus came to our coasts;
So that nothing could make him willing
To respect our royalty.[m]

"His word thus becomes to us a mirror,
In which we may contemplate our blemishes.[n]
In it we may look upon God,
Who is angry at our abominations;
In it we may see impartial justice,
Who is wrathful on account of our trespasses;
In it also we may see our city,
On which a stern sentence has come;
We may see in it the proclamation
Which hath proceeded from the mouth of the Just One.
For this is no cunning device,
Nor an ensnaring contrivance.
Had he preached to us prosperity,
We might have thought him a cunning man,
Who by the good tidings which he brings

Would earn a fair reward.
For whosoever desires profit
Makes a favourable augury;
And a soothsayer,[o] because he is avaricious,
Gives a flattering promise.
A Chaldæan also, because he lacks bread,[p]
Proclaims a good horoscope,[q]
That he may receive the more from the foolish.
He tells him of a wealthy lot,
Not because he is solicitous to give it to him,
(For indeed he bestows nothing,)
But by the promise of wealth he leads him captive,
And takes from him even what he hath.

"But this is a very faithful physician;
He speaks the truth to his patient;
He enters and proclaims a stern decree,
In the midst of the house,[r] to the sick man;
He prescribes to him a sharp fiery caustic,
Openly, in the midst of his chamber;[s]
He does not fear whether one can bear it,
When he announces the extraction of a tooth.[t]
Yea, he feareth not the King
To tell him the thought of his heart;[u]
He fears not the son of the King
To make him drink sharp medicine;[v]
He fears not a man who is terrible,
But binds him and employs the knife.[w]
He trembles not at a giant,
To humble his strength by his caustics.

Who will brand as a deceiver
A prophet who proclaims wrath?
For he is not a liar
Whose voice causes perturbation;
But if his speech is searching,
His spirit is sincere.

"But though a good physician is not fearful,
He exercises his art for profit;[x]
But this Hebrew is superior
To the grade of those who practise healing;
For not even his daily bread[y]
Will he eat from our city:
From the day that he came among us
He hath fasted and suffered much.
Now what urges him, without advantage,
To preach great wrath against us?
How is it that he is not afraid
To proclaim this against our city?
It hath been reported to us by the Hebrews
Respecting Moses and Elias,
That they fasted from food
Each of them forty days.[z]
But will this Hebrew prophet
Thus fast as long as they did?[a]
But if he fasts, being a righteous man,
Come! let us fast because we are sinners;
And if he, being a righteous man, makes supplication,
Let us strew[β] for ourselves sackcloth and ashes.
And perhaps he is fasting and praying,

That he may not prove false respecting us ;[γ]
Or strives to overturn the city,
That his preaching may obtain credit.
Since then by fasting he fights against us,
By fasting let us contend with him.
Yet not against the prophet
Shall we strive by our repentance;
For it is not he who does us harm,
But our sins have injured us.
The Hebrew does not overthrow our city,
But its iniquity is destroying it.

"There is among you, my friends,
Another and invisible enemy,
Against whom it behoves us
To contend most courageously.
Among us there is the history
Of righteous Job—that ancient man,
Even the dumb brute creatures
Must have heard, as I may say,[δ] concerning his triumphs;
For his temptation, like a trumpet,
Hath proclaimed his victory through the world.
It was Satan who accused[ε] him,
According to the relation of our fathers.
Now if the Wicked One accused
That righteous ancient man,
How much must he open his mouth
To bring a charge against sinners?
Different, and yet alike, is his wickedness

Towards the righteous and the evil;
For he persecuteth the righteous,
If peradventure he may make him a sinner;
And he slayeth the sinner lest he should repent.
It was he who went forth and overthrew
The house of the sons of Job;
He mingled their blood with their wine,[ζ]
And their goblets with their bodies.
He overthrew the banquet,
And the house upon its habitants.

" Perhaps he has received a mission,
And will overturn our city and state."[η]
In battles ye have conquered kings,
Now conquer Satan by prayer.
Bring forth therefore your battle array
To contend in war with him;
Put off and throw aside your mantles,[θ]
And arm yourselves with sackcloth against him.
Break and throw away your bows
And take refuge in prayers;
Lay down the sword—that feeble weapon,
And choose the triumphal sword,
Whose edge, even fasting, will inflict a wound
Upon the hidden wicked one in our city.
For that victory is as nothing
Which ye have borne away in the battle;
But now, if we should conquer,
It will be greater than all our triumphs;
And since I have entered into the ranks

In wars and dangers,[a]
I will now take the precedence
In this mighty battle.
Arm yourselves, then, like me,
And advance, my beloved soldiers!"

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[a] "To look down upon."—ܣܗܒ is generally, *to look upon, contemplate*; but the context demands the rendering we have given. A like use of it is found in Gregorius Abbas, quoted in *Assem. Bib. Or.*, vol. i., p. 172, ܠܐ ܬܣܗܒܘܢ ܬܠܡܝܕܝܟܘܢ, *ye shall not despise your disciples.*

[b] "Great wisdom."—Sy., *wisdoms*, a plural emphatic.

[c] "Perception."—Sy., ܛܥܡ *gustus, sapor*, referred to the mind, like the Hebrew טַעַם.

[d] "His appearance is unadorned."—ܦܫܝܛ is properly *simplex, purus, without any admixture.* According to Michaelis, it may be rendered, *without ornament*, as in 1 Kings vi. 33, where there is nothing corresponding in the Hebrew text; and also *common*, in opposition to that which is holy, as *common* bread, in distinction from that which is appropriated to the eucharist.

[e] "I flattered him."—ܦܬܐ is properly *to move, agitate;* then, *to excite* mentally; and, as in the text, *to flatter*, or at least, *to move by blandishments.*

[f] "He was not enticed."—ܣܠܝ does not ocur as a verb in the Lexicons, nor can we find it in Arabic. The noun ܣܠܘܝܐ is in 2 Tim. iv. 3 for the Greek, κνηθόμενοι, having *itching* ears. The idea of *pleasing inducement* seems to pervade the few examples which occur, and this sense is confirmed by the verb in this place. See the note of Michaelis in Castell.

[g] "He was a stranger to the sword."—That is, he treated it as a thing with whose fearful uses he was unacquainted, or which he did not recognize.

h "Between flattery and fear."—This whole description given of Jonah by the king, contrasts favourably with the apparent pusillanimity of the prophet, depicted in the brief account of the Holy Scriptures. It was customary with the fathers, as it is now with certain schools of divinity, to attribute nothing but excellence to the characters of the Old Testament, and to explain away their obvious faults. Ephraem is very much exposed to this charge, for, in the seventh hymn, on the Nativity, he speaks of shameless women as justified through a faith in the coming Messiah which he attributes to them. Thus he says of Tamar, "Holy was the adultery of Tamar on thy account."

i On the sword he looked contemptuously."—Sy., *he pouted out his lip*. On the Syriac phrase see Michaelis in Castell, under ܦܠܓ

It is scarcely possible for any one writing on Jonah to avoid imagining the trials to which his courage must have been exposed while delivering his message; but Ephraem has here accumulated his temptations with much skill. Two short extracts from a work of great eloquence and power* will illustrate the position of the prophet as described in the text.

"He must have been the subject of strange and conflicting emotions, when he entered the gates of that proud capital. The stern soldiers upon the battlements, armed with swords and shields, helmets and spears; the colossal images of winged compound animals that guarded the gates; the gorgeous chariots and horsemen that rattled and bounded through the streets; the pomp and state of the royal palaces; the signs of trade and commerce, of wealth and luxury, of pleasure and wickedness, on every hand; must have amazed and perplexed the prophet, conscious of his utter loneliness amidst a mighty population, of his despicable poverty amidst abounding riches, of his rough and foreign aspect amidst a proud and polished community,—there was enough to shake his faith and to cowardize his bold, haughty, and scornful spirit. Yet he dared not a second time abandon his mission. He therefore passed along the broadways and great places of concourse

* *Nineveh, its Rise and Fall.* By the Rev. J. Blackburn. London, 1850.

crying in solemn tones, "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown!"

Jonah, as might naturally be expected, was sent for by the king, who was approached with the reverence exacted by oriental monarchs:—

"Seated on his throne of state, his eunuchs, ministers, and other great officers stood around him, while those who were brought before him, forgetting the erect dignity of human nature, prostrated themselves in the most abject manner at his feet. Imagine Jonah introduced into the royal palace, and you will see that the scene and circumstances must have sorely tried his faith and stedfastness. As he passed along the lengthened corridors towards the hall of audience, he must have been struck with the air of uncommon splendour that surrounded him. On the walls he beheld the sculptured figures of priests and eunuchs, of kings, heroes, and ministers of state, of genii and idol gods, of battles and hunting scenes,—all elaborately and gorgeously coloured; while there stood at the angles of the passages colossal statues of strange, winged, compound creatures, like the guardian spirits of the place."

j "The love of money."—Sy., ܟܣܦܐ *silver*, the precious metal generally used when the circulating medium is spoken of.

k "Cleft the stone by its sword."—A bold figure, but with modifications found in most languages. Benedict, "*Sermo tamen telum erat, findebat marmora.*"

l "Nor respected my majesty."—Sy., *accepted the faces of.*

m "To respect our royalty."—Sy., *to accept the faces of our kingdom.*

n "In which we may contemplate our blemishes."—Many writers would have said, "In which we may see our *sins*;" but Ephraem uses the figure with precision. The term *blemishes*, or *spots*, describes what alone could be seen in the mirror, and the moral application of the metaphor is left to the reader.

o "A soothsayer."—ܟܗܢܐ, like the Heb. כֹּהֵן, is always used in a bad sense, as far as we have met with it. But Castell gives as one of its meanings, "*sacerdos officio suo fungens.*"

p "A Chaldæan also, because he lacks bread."—Literally, *because he is hungry*. The Chaldæans are constantly mentioned in Ephraem's controversial works. The term means *astrologers*, and *Chaldæa* is *astrology*, because the study of the heavens was cultivated in that region. In allusion to Ephraem's reprehension of this class of men, Asseman says, "Nothing is better known than that the Chaldees greatly delighted in the study of astrology from the very beginning of their nation. Study begat knowledge, and knowledge superstition. Thence all kinds of evil acts proceeded, so that what Tertullian says of the doctrine of Plato may be properly applied to the philosophy of the Chaldees, viz., that it became the seasoner *(condimentarium)* of all superstitions. (The quotation from Tertullian in Andrew's edition of Freund is *omnium hæreticorum.)* Hence the name of *Fate* began to be published abroad, so destructive to human society and liberty, and the occasion for offering impunity to all crimes." (*Bibliotheca Orientalis*, vol. i., p. 122.)

The curious description here given of the soothsayers and astrologers implies that however numerous they might be in the time of Ephraem, they practised without much emolument. For this their numbers might account. In a discourse intended for a public congregation, the sarcasm of Ephraem would not be thrown away.

q "A good horoscope."—بيت ميلد, literally, *the house of the birth*, signifies in the *Peschito*, *natalis dies*, a birthday, or *natalitia*, a birthday feast, (Matt. xiv. 6; Mark vi. 20.) The reason of the term is thus explained by De Dieu on the place in Matthew as quoted by Michaelis: "The stars are divided by astrologers into certain houses, as the house of Mars, of Venus, etc. Thus, when the horoscope or moment of birth was observed, it was customary to notice the position of the stars as existing at the time of the birth in this or that heavenly house. When, therefore, that celestial house occurred in which the horoscope of Herod was reckoned, his birthday feast was celebrated."

r "In the midst of the house."—A proceeding contrasted with the muttered tones and sly movements by which the soothsayers,

etc., imposed upon the ignorant, to whom the expression always applies, "*Omne ignotum pro magnifico.*"

s "In the midst of his chamber."—Sy., ܒܝܬ ܡܫܟܒܐ, which Castell renders, *cubiculum, cubile hominum et ferrarum, diversorium*, but without an example.

t "The extraction of a tooth."—A homely illustration, bringing before us the existence of a painful disease, and a sharp remedy, in earlier days. The word ܟܝܐ is by Castell rendered *dens molaris*, and as Ephraem would naturally use a term which would sharpen the operation, our text may be considered as confirming that meaning.

u "The thought of his heart."—That is, of Jonah, as is clear in the Syriac, but we found it impossible to prevent the ambiguity in English.

v "To make him drink sharp medicine."—In this statement, and the preceding one, the negatives are placed peculiarly, yet correctly. We should say, "He feared not to tell the king the thought of his heart;" but the object of fear being the king, the Syriac is more precise and exact.

w "Employs the knife."—Literally, *binds and cuts him.* The whole of the expressions of these verses are technical, and, in a few words, bring before us the whole routine of a surgical operation.

x "He exercises his art for profit."—The Sy. ܡܥܒܕ ܒܗ is here used peculiarly. ܥܒܕ ܒ is *subdidit, subjecit, humiliavit;* but none of these meanings will suit the context. As this verb is only a form of the more simple ܥܒܕ, it is proper to seek there for an explanation. Now Michaelis says that ܥܒܕ is sometimes *munere præficere, creare;* e. g., *consulem, episcopum*, etc., although the name of the office is not added. Thus the word before us may mean, *to subject himself to*, or *practise his art.* So in English we say of the medical profession, that it *practises*, without adding a noun.

y "His daily bread."—As there is no scriptural authority for the fasting of Jonah, it is probable that Ephraem draws the inference that he did so from the mention of *forty days*, which suggested the period during which our Saviour, and Moses and Elias, fasted.

To those historical events the fast of Lent must be ascribed, which, unknown to the earliest Christian times, gradually became established in the Church. Thus Neander says, under the second and third centuries; "It became by degrees a more universally prevailing custom, to prepare for the feast of Easter by a season of penitence and fasting. This fast was compared with the forty days' fast of Christ, although the whole time of forty days was by no means observed so generally as the name was applied." *(Church History*, vol. iii., p. 408, Clarke's edition.)

ᶻ "Each of them forty days."—Sy., *days, forty forty numbers*, a Semitic form for distributive pronouns.

ᵅ "Fast as long as they did?"—This confirms the observation made above in note *y*. Ephraem supposes in the king the same process of induction which originally led to the forty days' fast of Lent.

ᵝ "Let us strew for ourselves."—Benedict renders, "*Deprimant nos saccus et cinis*," *Let sackcloth and ashes depress us*. But this would require a plural verb, whereas this, ܢܣܟܒ, if the third person, must be singular. We make it the first person plural from ܣܟܒ *stravit*. Sackcloth and ashes were often strewn for the mourner upon the ground.

ᵞ "That he may not prove false respecting us."—The jealousy of Jonah for his credit as a prophet, which, in the mode of its manifestation, gives such an unamiable view of his character, is here supposed to have developed itself early in the forty days. There is no reason to think that Jonah *prayed* that Nineveh might perish; this would indicate a far worse disposition than his chagrin at the non-fulfilment of his prediction.

ᵟ "As I may say."—This rendering we have given to ܟܕ, which is generally *forsan, fortassis*. It qualifies the very bold statement of this verse, as the *ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν* of the Greeks.

ᵋ "It was Satan who accused him."—The Syriac expression for *to accuse* is *to eat the pieces of any one; comedere frustra alicujus*, Gesenius. On this singular phrase, common to the Semitic tongues, much has been said by philologists. Schaaf says, that "calumniators were accustomed to eat some food before they accused

others." Storr, quoted by Gesenius, says that *to feed on calumny* is to labour to fill the desire of an envious mind. In Arabic the phrase is *to eat the flesh* of any one. See Psalm xxvii. 2; Job xix. 22. May not the expression mean that a detractor or calumniator eats up the character which he has first torn to pieces?

ʕ "He mingled their blood with their wine."—The Syriac we have rendered wine is ܚܡܪܐ, a form we cannot find in the Lexicons. Perhaps it is an error for ܚܡܪܝ *their wines*.

ɳ "Our city and state."—The words ܡܕܝܢܬܐ and ܩܪܝܬܐ are here used in a way which indicates that they designated two separate things. Perhaps the first was the city itself, and the latter the suburbs and the country round about. See note *t*, Part V.

It may be useful in this place to introduce the following observations on ancient Nineveh, from the *Cyclopœdia of Biblical Literature*, edited by Dr. Kitto.—See the article *Nineveh*.

"The three mounds of Khorsabad, Koyunjik, and Nimrud stand at three corners of a trapezium sixty miles in circuit, and if to these we take the great Karamles mound, near the great Zab, about twelve miles from Nimrud, as the remaining corner, the trapezium is mapped out in this once fertile plain. It is not at once intelligible how this large tract should be coincident with the former site of the Assyrian metropolis, but it coincides with Jonah's statement, that Nineveh was an *exceeding great city* of three days' journey; and we are to dismiss ideas founded on compactly built European towns, with houses closely packed together in narrow streets, and to understand that Nineveh was, as many great eastern cities are at this day, a collection of scattered houses interspersed with green pastures, extensive gardens, and fruitful vineyards. In Jonah it is stated that the city contained not only numerous people, but 'also much cattle.' The king's palace had its park stocked with game and animals of the chase; and this, together with the pasture-grounds, the kitchen and pleasure gardens, and the vineyards, would all be included within the sixty miles of circuit. An ancient eastern city, when once surrounded by a strong and high wall, was deemed to be secure of being taken by an enemy, unless by a siege long enough to produce famine

among the inhabitants; and to guard against this, it was endeavoured to include within the city the means of rearing cattle and of raising such vegetable produce as required to be grown every season, and could not, like corn, be stored away in granaries to be kept for many years. This adequately explains the vast extent ascribed to Nineveh, Babylon, and other ancient cities."

θ "Your mantles."—Sy., ܕܠܘܦܝܟ. As we can find no meaning to this, except that of *furnace*, with different vowels, we give that of Benedict, which indeed, or something like it, is required by the connection. He gives *diploides*, *double robes* or *mantles*, apparently with an etymological reference to the Syriac word.

ι "Will inflict a wound."—This may be rendered, "*will amputate, or cut off* the hidden wicked one."

κ "Dangers."—ܕܡܥܕܢ. No such word is to be found, as far as our search has extended. Benedict omits it altogether. Perhaps it is a derivative from ܥܕܢ *compulit, coegit*, by a transposition of letters.

Part the Fifth.

THE KING SETS THE EXAMPLE, THE PEOPLE FOLLOW, AND PUT ON SACKCLOTH.—HE SENDS TO HIS SUBJECTS, AND HIMSELF GOES THROUGH THE CITY URGING ALL TO REPENTANCE.—JONAH IS FILLED WITH WONDER, AND CONTRASTS THE REFORMATION OF THE NINEVITES WITH THE IMPENITENCE OF HIS OWN PEOPLE.—DIVINE GRACE TAUGHT NINEVEH THAT BY FASTING THE THREATENED DOOM MIGHT BE AVERTED.

THE King[a] arose and laid aside his robes,
They all put off their attire.
The King hastened, and clothed himself with sackcloth,
And his troops, like him, put on blackness.
The Assyrians, so sumptuously adorned,
Were suddenly clothed in mourning.
By the hair upon their garments,
The mystery of Jacob was illustrated;[b]
For they by remorse prostrated themselves,
And chose his victory by his repentance.[c]
For, like Esau, Satan was foiled of his expectation,[d]
The master like his pupil;
And these conquered, like Jacob,

The disciples like their master.
The King called the chief of his mighty men,
To go and visit his encampments;
Messengers went among the hosts,
To the intent that every man should be penitent.—
"Let the impure," *they said,* "put off his uncleanness,
Lest it should vanquish him in the battle;
Let the miser cast off his covetousness,
Lest he should be impeded[e] in the conflict;
Let the angry man be reconciled to his neighbour,
Let there be no wrath in his heart,
Lest his salvation be put in peril;
And let not his lips contrive[f] strife,
That the city may be blessed by acts of kindness.
Let no man falsely accuse[g] nor oppress another,
Neither let him be guilty of perjury;[h]
Lest the sentence of doom which hath proceeded against us,
Should justly prove to be true.
Let the fetters on our hearts be broken,
That our supplication be not impeded;
Let no man pursue after folly,
Lest a greater torment should overtake us."—
Such things, and others like them,
The heralds proclaimed in the great city.

The King remained in trouble,
And diligently inspected the city;
He decreed a fast for his camp,
And supplied it with the armour of truth;

He called his regiments to prayer,
For that was their only safety.
He proclaimed an earnest supplication,
A bow whose arrows would be victorious;
Armour which would surround the oppressed,
And a fierce[i] sword for those wielding it.

When the King had inspected these,
And carefully armed his regiments;
He turned himself to give weapons to the city,
The men and the women together;
That the whole people unitedly,
Might do battle for their safety.
By his own sackcloth he set an example;
He armed the city with sackcloth.
It was the son of Nimrod,[j] the mighty one,
It was a warrior, and a hunter,[k]
Who leaving off to slay great wild beasts,
Slew, in the place of the beasts of the field,
The hateful sins of his people.
Instead of things hunted in the field,
He purged the city from crimes.
He let alone the wild creatures without,
And killed the iniquities within.
He rejected the poison of dragons,[l]
And sweetened his disposition[m] by fasting.
In place of the chariot of his majesty,
He visited the city on foot;
He called on all his people,
That he might awaken them to repentance.

The King wandered in a private manner,
That he might purge them from impurity;
He walked about in humility,
That he might establish the agitated city;
In places of low resort[n]
He sowed tranquillity among the streets.

Jonah saw this, and wonder seized him;
He blushed for the children of his own people.
He saw the Ninevites were victorious,
And he wept for the seed of Abraham;
He saw the seed of Canaan in sound mind,
While the seed of Jacob was infatuated;
He saw the uncircumcised cut to the heart,
While the circumcised had hardened it;
The former gloried in the Sabbath,[o]
While they of the circumcision despised it,
And placed it between death and life.[p]

The King of Nineveh knew
That the cause of wrath was folly;
He cut off the evil occasions,
And quickly composed the storms.[q]
As a physician he had visited his city;
And knew the medicine which was proper[r] for it;
By fasting, that powerful physic,
He healed the malady of the city;
And by sackcloth and ashes,
Drove sin from the midst of it.
Because they forsook their crimes

The Good magnified his gift;
They gave up accumulation and usury,[s]
And the city and its suburbs[t] were delivered.
Jonah was an avenger of iniquities,
But fasting remitted their sins.
The Ninevites gathered themselves together,
And took counsel how they might be saved;
The whole people appointed a fast,
That by it they might propitiate God.

Who made known to the Ninevites
These hidden divine mysteries?
That fasting was able to remit
The stern decree of God?
Jonah did not give them this information,
For he feared lest they should be pardoned;
Jonah had proclaimed to the Ninevites,
That the stern decree was true.
The Ninevites believed Jonah's words,
But made his sentence of no effect;
For they recognized a distinction,[u]
Between God and man;
That man was but as man,
Whereas God was gracious.
They saw that the prophet was severe,
They concluded that God was gentle.
They argued not against him who was severe,
But they sought the favour of the Gracious;
They attributed justice to the prophet,
But goodness to God.

While Jonah cut off hope,
In fasting much hope was found;
While Jonah broke the heart,
Prayer afforded it support;
And while the indignation was fierce,
Its heat grew cold by sackcloth.
The cloud lowered with thick darkness,
At the sight of the sackcloth it was dissipated.[v]
The sky was dark before,
By repentance it became serene.

The inhabitants of Asia, who were affrighted,
Were now assured by temperance;
The city tottered to its fall,[w]
But the giving of alms strengthened its pillars.
Mammon, which had multiplied crimes,
Now obtained pardon for trespasses;
The iniquitous were preserved by the pious,
For they taught them to fast and pray.
Old men prayed loudly as they sat in sackcloth,
And became assured as to their salvation.
Young men who had wept in affliction,
Now retained their crowns;[x]
And betrothed virgins who had put on sadness,
Were preserved for their bridals.

The beasts who had fasted from water,
Uttered cries in their different manners.[y]
There was a loud wailing in all voices,
Both of human beings and brute creatures.

Justice heard their groaning,
And Grace redeemed their city.
From the day Jonah pronounced the sentence,
Great had been their diligence;[z]
Supplication was without intermission,
And fasting still urged to fast;
Sackcloth was doubled to sackcloth,
And ashes in abundance were on them.
No eye there refrained
From repentant weeping,
No tongue there kept silence
From loudly imploring for mercy;
The ear there heard nothing
But the sound of wailing and grief,
Which arose from all sides;
The eyes[α] there looked not upon
The shining form of the countenance,
Nor upon a laughing mouth;
For the tears of the sad and contrite[β]
Were renewed every hour,
And descended like showers through repentance.
Alms of all varieties,
Were daily there administered;
And intercessions of every kind,
Were daily there renewed;
Earnest entreaty for all benefits,
Was every day witnessed there;
For a fountain of all consolations,
Was there opened by Mercy.

Then sobriety, without restraint,
Clothed both men and women;
A stedfast purity
Was maintained there by fasting.
Benignity towards each other,
Gave sweetness to their tongues;
By unity and concord,
Like fellow-members they were mingled together.
Grace bowed itself down to them,
And upon them mercy shed its dew.
Love existed among the children,
And truth between a man and his friend.
Among the angry there was reconciliation,
And unity took the place of discord.
With the women there was quietness,
But a silence full of good services.
The old men made intercession,
And gave counsel full of profit.
The youths were continent,
The virgins were modest.
Between maidens and their mistresses
One harmony was established.
There was no look of haughtiness,
For garments of humility girded them;
There were no angry excitements,
And jealousy was destroyed by *impending* wrath.
There was one feeling of kindness,
With servants and their lords;
There was one equal drink,
With masters and their slaves;

And the same humble food,
To the rich and the poor.
One sackcloth was placed beneath
The hired servants and noblemen.
The whole city had but one yoke;
It was occupied by repentance.[δ]

One work was carried on,
For a common salvation was to be received;
Lamentations, in various voices,
Were uttered there every day;
And the groaning of different sufferers,
Was always found there;
And the loud cry of various pains,
Was heard from them all.
By astonishment of every kind
The whole city was moved;
It altogether experienced
The surprise of various apprehensions;
Like a sparrow upon a thorn,
The city sat in fear;
It was moved and tottered to and fro,
Like a reed among the winds.[ε]
When the day dawned, they did not think
That to them it would become evening;
It became night, and they were not assured
That the morn would rise upon them.
Each day death was present,
And the whole people trembled;

The whole city with one consent,
Was knocking at the gates of the grave!

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a "The King arose."—The excellent qualities ascribed to this king of Assyria make us wish that his character had some foundation in historical truth; but, apart from the biblical fact that he proclaimed a fast, and suggested the possibility of the wrath of God being averted by repentance, we have no reason to suppose that Ephraem drew his matter from any source but his imagination. Yet, after all, his details may be said to have a legitimate origin in the brief statement of the Scriptures.

It has always been doubtful who this king was, but probability is on the side of Pul, the first king of Assyria mentioned in the Bible. This is the opinion of Archbishop Usher, and has generally been adopted. Hales thinks that it was the father of Pul who reigned when Jonah was sent to Nineveh. Others have fixed on Sardanapalus. Of Pul we learn in 2 Kings xv. 19, that in the wicked reign of Menahem the king of Israel, "Pul the king of Assyria came against the land; and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver, that his hand might be with him to confirm the kingdom in his hand. And Menahem exacted the money of Israel, even of all the mighty men of wealth, of each man fifty shekels of silver, to give to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria turned back, and stayed not there in the land." He is again mentioned in 1 Chron. v. 26, "And the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria," etc.

In these short notices of Pul there is nothing which does not harmonize with the king mentioned in Jonah. He had been into the territories of the Israelites, and might there have become sufficiently acquainted with their former history to make him attach importance to the message of the prophet. Thus the absence of any knowledge of his after history allows us to hope that his

repentance was permanent as well as sincere at the time. But if it had been Sardanapalus instead of Pul, we should have the painful fact before us, that such a remarkable event in his history had been productive of only transient results. In that remarkable work, *The Chronicles of Cartaphilus the wandering Jew*, by Mr. Hoffman, the presumption that Sardanapalus was king of Nineveh when Jonah preached in it, is worked up in very striking language. A short extract will not be inappropriate in this place:—

"Nor will it ever be forgotten that there reigned Sardanapalus, a name infamously immortal for sensuousness! Inebriated by voluptuousness, even to madness, that king, beyond all other mortals, shewed the ultimate point of fatuous licentiousness to which man attains when Jehovah's presence is utterly extinguished in the soul. . . . But the holy prophet came to him at last: Jehovah's words can melt a soul of adamant, quicker than lightning shall rive the oak!—a deadly fear seized on the king when Nineveh and all its glories were doomed to ruin, should the prophet's warning remain unheeded.

"Forty days, nevertheless, were yielded to the king and to all his people, in which they might return to their allegiance to the only One-God, and thereby escape the terrific woes denounced against them! Sardanapalus was early in sackcloth and ashes!—his many perfumes were forgotten,—his soul seemed to recoil from his myriad sins and follies. '*From the greatest of them even unto the least*,' his people obeyed their king's decree, which commanded that neither man nor beast should eat or drink for a time: but that all, yea, even the beasts, should be clothed in sackcloth; and that all having speech should cry out mightily until Jehovah's fierce anger should be averted. And so was it done in Nineveh, and the Lord's mercy prevailed!

"But, alas! ashes and sackcloth, and pallid fear, and starving abstinences may not reach the inner soul; such forced repentance fades from memory, and, when the fearfully comminated evils are withdrawn, and the oblivious veil of time has slowly arisen, men again become bold, and soon thereafter as daring as ever; or, with a larger confidence in mercy, they still rely on a further

forgiveness, should the threatenings hang but remotely over them!" (Vol. ii., p. 78.)

b "The mystery of Jacob was illustrated."—A remarkable instance of the fanciful way in which early Christian writers employed the Old Testament. The reference is to Gen. xxvii. 16, "And she put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck." The application is as follows:—As Jacob by the hairy skins of the kids deceived his father Isaac, and obtained a blessing, so the Ninevites by clothing themselves in sackcloth of hair deceived Satan. By the former procedure, Esau was foiled of his expectation of the privileges of primogeniture; by the latter, Satan lost the Ninevites, his expected prey. Further, Satan is said to be the master of Esau, and Jacob the master of the Ninevites; *master* being used in the sense of *teacher* or *instructor*. This is a wild kind of exegesis, by which almost anything may be proved from the Bible. We turned to Ephraem's *Commentary on Genesis* in the hope of obtaining some illustration of this passage, but although this part of the life of Jacob is mentioned there, this subject is not referred to.

c "And chose his victory by his repentance."—That is, by repenting like Jacob, they, like Jacob, obtained blessings. But to what does the repentance of Jacob refer? Is it possible that in the hairy skins with which Jacob deceived his father, Ephraem discerned an emblem of mental compunction accompanying his deceitful act, and at the same time atoning for it? This seems to be the meaning, and yet we are unwilling to attribute to Ephraem a system of ethics so like the abuse of penance in the Church of Rome in modern times. The Syriac is very terse and elliptical, and will perhaps admit another meaning.

d "Satan was foiled."—The word here used ܚܝܒ is, generally, *reus*, *debitor fuit*, but the rendering now given is required by the context. Benedict, *victus est*. Castell gives the precise idea which we think the text conveys, *spe victoriæ frustratus est*, but it does not appear that the text he quotes in illustration (Hos. v. 15) is an example in point.

e "Lest he should be impeded."—ܒܘܫ, which is more frequently *turbavit*, *agitavit*, occurs in this sense in Gal. v. 7, "Ye

did run well; who hath hindered you?" ܕܢܬܟܘܢ. Benedict makes covetousness the nominative, *ne perturbet pugnantem.*

f "Contrive strife."—The verb ܠܘܩ is *conjunxit, consociavit*, but, like the Latin *compono*, is used in a bad sense. Benedict, *neque os componat jurgia.*

g "Falsely accuse."—The *Peschito* uses ܣܟܘܦܢܛܝܢ for the Greek συκοφαντεῖν in Luke iii. 14; but Michaelis endeavours to throw doubt on its having the sense of *calumny*, or *false accusation*, in that passage, on the plea that the Greek word there has a much wider sense. But the peculiarity of the word συκοφαντεῖν, and its rare occurrence, would naturally make the Syriac translator careful in rendering it, as far as possible, according to its peculiar use.

h "Perjury."—This is expressed by a periphrasis, *neither let him swear and lie.*

i "A fierce sword."—Or, a *devouring* sword. The adjective ܚܪܒܐ does not occur in the Lexicons. ܚܪܒ according to Castell, is *ferus factus est.*

j "Nimrod the mighty one."—From the commentary of Ephraem on Gen. x. 8—10, we are able to present to our readers an explanation of the character and conduct of Nimrod not found, we believe, in any modern exposition. "It is said of Nimrod, that he was *a mighty hunter before the Lord*, because, in accordance with the will of God, he contended with each of the families (to whom the earth was apportioned), and drove them thence, that they might go to the regions which the Lord had divided to them. And on this account it was said, '*Like Nimrod, the mighty hunter before the Lord*,' because a man who would pronounce a great blessing upon his master or prince said, 'Be thou like Nimrod the mighty hunter, who was renowned in the wars of the Lord.' He reigned in Arach, which is Edessa, and in Achar, which is Nisibis, and in Calaja, which is Ctesiphon, and in Rahabot, which is Hadiab, and in Calaja, which is Hethra, and in Rasa, called also Ris-Haina, which at this day is a great city." (*Opera*, vol. iv., p. 58, and also p. 154). This explanation is at least as reasonable as those which currently give Nimrod a bad name, for, as observed

by Dr. Kitto (*Pictorial Bible* in loco), "it would be hard to find anything against Nimrod in these verses, unless by inference, founded principally on his name, which signifies *a rebel.*" But as the names of the men who figure in early Scripture history were generally given them at their *birth*, it is difficult to see how the character of Nimrod can be associated with his.

k "A hunter."—The Sy., ܓܒܪܐ, is the word employed in the *Peschito*. Ephraem in his *Commentary* says, "By this name the Persians call a hunter." But Michaelis says he had never found the word in Persian. Ephraem adds (*Opera*, vol. iv., p. 153), "Nimrod was called a hunter because when the tower of Babel was building, he hunted all kinds of game, and brought it for the sustenance of the builders." This seems a little contradictory to the explanation given in the former note, but it may be said that he obtained the name *hunter* in this way, and was called *a mighty hunter before the Lord* on the above account.

l "He rejected the poison of dragons."—In the margin of the Syriac text is this note, Deut. xxxii. 33, *i. e.*, *vinum*. That passage is, in the English version, "*Their wine is the poison of dragons;*" but while Ephraem has ܟܝܢ ܕܬܢܝܢ, the *Peschito* reads, ܚܡܝܬܗ ܕܬܢܝܢ, of nearly the same meaning. Certainly the connection here makes *wine* a good interpretation of the very strong phrase, *the poison of dragons*. The passage also receives illustration from what is said of wine in Prov. xxiii. 32, "At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder."

m "His disposition."—This seems the most fit rendering of ܡܕܒܪܢܘܬܐ, though the word is more frequently applied to the understanding.

n "In places of low resort."—Sy., *in its humble pathways.*

o "The former gloried in the Sabbath."—An intimation that, in the opinion of Ephraem, the Sabbath was observed by the Ninevites; unless this is a mere conventionalism, to express the idea of *piety*. But it must be noticed that Benedict gives quite a different turn to the words: "*Those who formerly gloried in the Sabbath, now make light of and neglect circumcision.*" The Syriac certainly will admit this version, but we think the contrast we have

given in the two verses is demanded by the connection. Besides, is it historically true that the Jews did make light of circumcision? That they neglected the Sabbath in its spirit is well known to be charged against them by the prophets. But we may be wrong in our view.

p "And placed it between life and death."—That is, as we understand it, *treated it with indifference*, neglected the blessings and penalties connected with the due observance or the neglect of the Sabbath.

q "Composed the storms."—Either allayed the mental agitations of the people, or caused the preternatural concussions of the earth, which are alluded to in other places, to cease.

r "Which was proper for it."—Sy., ܕܝܢܚܐ ܠܗ, *which fell to it; i. e.*, which belonged to it, as a portion allotted. This meaning is not given in the Lexicons. Benedict, *morbo præsentaneum medicinam*, a medicine quickly operating.

s "They gave up accumulation and usury."—The Syriac is *horn* and *increase*, ܩܪܢܐ ܘܬܘܣܦܬܐ, the latter being of very common occurrence, while the former is not often used in this sense. The Lexicons give us no aid in obtaining the above rendering; but another instance, from Ephraem, sufficiently establishes it. It is found in the second Homily *In Natalem Domini* (*Opera*, vol. v., p. 435), in a passage which is translated and printed in the *Hymns and Homilies*, p. xcvi. :—

> "How will thy servant be condemned
> Both in *principal* and interest;"

where the word rendered *principal* is ܩܪܢܐ. The derivation of the idea of *accumulation*, *principal*, *capital sum*, is easy enough from *horn*, which signifies the *head*, *top*, or *extremity*; like our *capital* and *principal* from *caput* and *principium*; yet we have searched in vain for an example of this sense in all the Lexicons we have been able to command. Perhaps the Arabic قَرَنَ *junxit unam rem alteri* may suggest a derivation. Benedict in this place renders the word by *cornu*, in the other by *caput*.

t "The city and its suburbs."—See note *b* to the Proœmium,

and note η, Part IV. The occurrence of the two words together certainly indicates a specific difference, and *suburbs* is probably a correct version. Benedict, *suburbia.*

u "They recognized a distinction."—Sy., *for like discerners* or *dividers, they recognized.*

The verses in this paragraph are very coincident in sentiment with the following passage from Dr. Kitto's *Daily Bible Illustrations*, already quoted:—"The prophet had not called them to repentance, but had warned them of impending doom; but this they still trusted might not be irrevocable, and they ventured to seize hold of a hope which the prophet had not extended to them: 'Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from us His fierce anger that we perish not?' Blessed was that thought of theirs. The Lord, abundant in mercy, had inspired them, at that time, with a conception of Him which His prophet had not taught. It was *not* yet too late. All was *not* yet lost. God beheld their acts; He saw that they turned from their evil ways; and then 'God repented of the evil that He said He would do unto them, and He did it not.'"

v "At the sight of the sackcloth it was dissipated."—One of those strange conceits which Ephraem loved to indulge occasionally. A dark cloud would be more naturally dissipated by a bright beam, but here sackcloth is the instrument of putting it to flight.

w "The city tottered to its fall."—Sy., *the city moved as through falling.* The phrase ܐܝܟ ܕܠܡܐ *as though lest*, is not found in the Lexicons.

x "Now retained their crowns."—In verse 43 of Part III. bridegrooms and brides are represented as losing sight of their nuptials in the general distress; they are here exhibited as again contemplating the unions which had been interrupted. The allusion is to the custom of crowning the bride and bridegroom on the occasion of their wedding.

y "Uttered cries in their different manners."—Sy., *cried out* ܒܟܝ ܒܟܝ *manners manners;* a distributive form before alluded to. On the compulsory fasting of brute animals, Dr. Kitto

observes:—"It seems a remarkable circumstance that the Ninevites should have extended the acts of fasting and humiliation to their cattle. We find nothing of this among the Hebrews, but it was a custom with the ancient heathen nations to withhold food from their cattle in times of mourning, and in some instances they cut off the hair of their beasts, as well as their own. The animals which were, in this instance, covered with sackcloth, were doubtless horses, mules, asses, and camels, which were divested of their usual caparisons and ornaments, and invested with sackcloth for the occasion,—a custom having some analogy to that of our clothing with black the horses employed in funereal solemnities." *(Daily Bible Illustrations.)*

ε "Their diligence."—We have found this meaning given to ܙܗܝܪܘܬ only in the Lexicon attached to Hahn's *Chrestomathy*. He there renders it, *alacritas*, *velocitas*, *promptitudo*, *studium*. The word clearly has this meaning in the Hymn *On the Death of a Monk*. *(Opera*, tom vi., p. 253.)

> "In *diligence* of fasting thou didst excel others,
> And obtain great renown."

See remarks on this word in *Hymns and Homilies*, note *b*, p. 148.

α "The eyes."—Sy., *the pupils*.

β "The tears of the sad and contrite."—Literally, *the broken*, as in Luke iv. 18, ܕܬܒܝܪܝ ܠܒܐ *broken in heart*.

γ "Their lords."—Literally, *their kings*, a clear instance of that term extending to others than men of royal station.

δ "It was occupied by repentance."—The description of reformation of manners which this verse closes is of great beauty, and one which we think we may say no one could have drawn who had not dipped his pencil in the colours of inspiration. We are reminded by it of the divine ethics exhibited in the twelfth and thirteenth chapters of the Epistle to the Romans; a passage which of itself is sufficient to proclaim the heavenly origin of the record.

ε "A reed among the winds."—Not shaken *by* the wind merely, but moved hither and thither, like a reed exposed to contrary currents.

Part the Sixth.

JONAH CONTEMPLATES FROM A DISTANCE THE ALTERED STATE OF NINEVEH.—HE COMPARES ITS REPENTANT INHABITANTS WITH THE REBELLIOUS AND OBDURATE ISRAELITES.—THE CRIMES OF ISRAEL ARE ENUMERATED.—THE PREDICTED DAY AT LENGTH ARRIVES.—THE FEARS OF ALL CLASSES ARE DESCRIBED.—PRETERNATURAL PORTENTS INDICATE THE COMING DOOM.

JONAH numbered up the days,
And the Ninevites counted their sins;
Jonah kept a reckoning of the nights,
Nineveh wept for her offences.
She laboured hard for six weeks,
With tears, and watching, and groaning.
While Jonah was in his bower,[a]
The Ninevites were weeping in the city.
When Jonah saw their tears,
He feared much at their fastings.
To him the gourd[b] afforded shade,
But they bore the heat of the day.[c]
His bower twined[d] itself *over him*;
Upon them the right hand *of God* rested.[e]

He saw their souls were poured out
Like water before the Most High;
He saw kings lying prostrate,
In the dust while fasting.
He saw little children crying,
And calves and lambs bleating;
He saw the mothers pouring out
Their tears upon their little ones;
The breasts of sucklings were baptized
With the tears of those who gave them birth.

He saw the old men weeping,
While the aged of his people were living in luxury;
He saw Nineveh was mourning,
While Zion waxed wanton.
He looked on Asshur and greatly despised
Jerusalem, inflated with arrogancy.
Behold! the impure women had become modest,
But the daughters of his people were defiled.
He saw the possessed ones[f] in Nineveh
Were changed, and had learned the truth;
He saw the prophets in Zion,
Were deceivers and full of falsehood.
He saw the idols in public places
Were broken, among the heathen;
He looked into[g] and saw the secret chambers
Of his people were full of idolatry.[h]

He thus, being a Hebrew, received
A proof in respect of the heathen;

And laid aside the wonder that had held him,
That the priest had entertained Moses,[i]
Or the widow woman,[j] Elias,
Or that David, when Saul persecuted him,
Was honoured among the heathen.[k]
He feared lest should now be falsified
The preaching with which he was commissioned;
For he knew that his proclamation,
Might become of no effect by repentance.
He saw that the daughters of the heathen,
Had abjured the idols of their fathers;[l]
But he mourned that the daughters of his people,
Were weeping for Tammuz.[m]
He saw that the soothsayers and diviners,[n]
Were abolished in Nineveh;
But that wizards and Chaldeans,[o]
In Judæa roamed at large.
He saw the priests with their own hands
Root up the altars[p] of Asshur;
But he saw every man in Zion
Built his altar near his door.[q]

When Jonah looked on Nineveh,
She gathered her sons together as a Church.[r]
All Nineveh was purified;
The fast in the midst of her was held in honour;
But the holy temple in Zion,
They had made a den of robbers.[s]
He looked on Nineveh, and the King
Paid adoration unto God;

He looked on Jeroboam,[t]
And he was worshipping the calves.
The sins of the Ninevites made them tremble,
With loud crying before God;
The Hebrews sacrificed their sons,
And offered up their daughters to devils.[u]
In their fasting, the Ninevites
Poured out their tears to God;
But the Hebrews to their graven images
Poured out their wines.
From the Ninevites there was perceived[v]
The fair savour[w] of mourning;
But in the midst of Zion there breathed
The perfume and incense of idols.

The hope of that people was being cut off,
But that of the heathen was increasing;
Among the Jews there was luxury,[x]
Among the Ninevites lowliness;
In the midst of Judæa there was open iniquity,
But great mourning in Nineveh.
There the living weep for the dead,[y]
But the Ninevites wept for the living;
Each one mourned for his son,
And made lamentation for his relative.[z]
The beauty of women faded away,
Through weeping and fasting.
Each man kissed his fellow,
And yet shed tears upon his breast.
Great was the mourning there,

And fearful there the suffering;
For they were invited, while yet living,
To lie low beneath the earth.
As their days became shorter,
Their tears flowed more abundantly;[α]
Like men who were already extinct,
And no longer among the living.

The day was arriving when *the city* should be overthrown,
The time drew near when it should be destroyed;
And the whole city had become
But mourning, and weeping, and lamentation.
The dust of the ground was moistened,
Their tears made it as clay.
The fathers placed before their sons,
The possessions they should inherit,
That they might, at the same time, weep
For their heirs and their inheritances.
With tears they placed in the same array,
Their betrothed sons and daughters;[β]
In whom could life remain,
By that bitter spectacle?
Brides and bridegrooms arose,
And excited the cries and tears *of beholders;*
Boys and girls stood before them,
And a cry rose up to heaven,
As they looked upon the beauty of the lads,
And the stature of their sons.
Those who stood upon the earth

Fancied it was rent asunder;
It appeared to be as a ship,
Which was tossed and moved beneath them.

Hoary men and women stood there,
With those who should bury[γ] them at their side;
They wailed and wept on this account:—
"Who will close our eyes and enshroud us?"[δ]
They lamented for their deaths,
For there would be none to inter them, and comfort *their survivors.*
They wept on account of their graves,
For who would dig them and place them in them?
They wept for their garments,
For none would put on their shroud.[ε]
Every man, with bitterness, depicted
His death before his eyes;
And they howled aloud as they remembered,
To what an end they were invited.
Each became confounded as he reflected
What kind of death awaited him.
All hearts were smitten asunder,
As they heard the earth was yawning;
The colour of their countenance fled,
As they heard the earth was removing.

The kings and queens stood there,
Their crowns upon their sackcloth;
They perceived that for them there was no morrow,
And their mortal pangs were multiplied.

Each man grasped[ζ] the dust,
And called louder upon God;
All cried out in prayer,
Their palms were filled with ashes.
No lamentable sound was wanting there,
It was all lamenting and weeping,[η]
The sackcloth walls shed tears,
Being sprinkled with bitter ashes.[θ]
The very day grew dark,
It became thick with sackcloth;
The air itself was affrighted,
And the heaven trembled,
The cloud and thick darkness enveloped it.
The gloom became thicker and gathered strength;
Loud noises clashed together;[ι]
The thunder met its fellow,
And lightnings pressed on lightnings.
Each man beheld the earth,
With consternation and commotion of heart;
For he thought it was near to ruin.
They all wept together
As men who should suddenly perish.
Every one wept with his brother,
And wailed aloud for his friend.
Each man called to his companion,
That he might see him and be satisfied with his presence;
That his speech might end with his,
And they might descend together to the grave![κ]

[a] "While Jonah was in his bower."—That, namely, made by himself, and afterwards covered by the gourd. (Jonah iv. 5, 6.) The word rendered *bower*, ܣܟܟܐ, signifies *a shady place*, affording relief from the rays of the sun, without being substantial.

[b] "The gourd."—Ephraem uses only ܩܘܣܐ, but in every place in which the gourd is mentioned, in the *Peschito* version of Jonah, it is expressed by ܩܘܣܐ ܕܩܝܛܝܢ, for the Hebrew קִיקָיוֹן. What this natural production was has never been exactly ascertained, and the question gave rise to some sharp controversies early in the Christian era. We are disposed to think the tradition of the Syrians, round the site of ancient Nineveh, should decide the matter; and we are told by Niebuhr that the Christians and Jews of Mosul say it was the *el-kera* whose shadow refreshed Jonah; a sort of gourd which has very large leaves, very large fruit, and lasts but about four months. This is the ܩܝܛܐ of the *Peschito*, in roman letters, and it appears unnecessary to look further for an explanation. The first word, ܩܘܣܐ, signifies *a young shoot*, or *branch*, so that the whole expression of the *Peschito* is, *a young shoot of a gourd; palmes cucurbitæ*, Castell. But why does Ephraem only mention this young shoot, without referring to the *kera?* Perhaps the idea conveyed by the *Peschito*, and entertained by Ephraem was, that the booth or bower of Jonah was, in the first instance a kera, but being insufficient to shelter him, the Lord made a vigorous young shoot to grow from it. The *Codex Syriaco-Hexaplaris* uses ܩܝܛܐ, as Ephraem also does in other passages.

The following remarks from a Puritan divine are too appropriate to be omitted:—"Jonah went out of the city and remained there, as if he yet expected and desired its overthrow. He made a booth of the boughs of trees, and dwelt in that. It is common for those who have fretful, uneasy spirits, industriously to create inconveniences for themselves, that they may still have something to complain of. God might have left him to his own choice, his own doing, the house of his own building, open to the winds and the weather; but he prepared a plant with broad leaves, that suddenly grew up and covered the hut, so as to keep off much of the cold

and heat. It was a shadow over his head to deliver him from his grief, that being refreshed in body, he might better guard against the uneasiness of mind which outward crosses and troubles often occasion and increase. See how tender God is of his people in their afflictions, even though they are foolish and froward." This is a fair specimen of what may be called verbal commentary, which feels and admits no difficulties. It is observable that Ephraem says nothing here respecting a plant being created *pro re nata*, nor of its supernatural growth; this however is alluded to in Part VIII.

c "The heat of the day."—The word ܒܝܘܡܐ is properly used for that portion of the day in which the sun shines, while ܝܘܡܐ is the day of twenty-four hours.

d "His bower twined itself."—Castell says that ܣܠܩ is used peculiarly of twisting and plaiting the hair, and it well expresses the growth of the gourd.

e "Upon them the right hand of God rested."—The word ܝܡܝܢܐ *the right hand*, is used here absolutely, and we feel unable to understand its precise application. Benedict, whom we have followed, renders the verse, "*Obumbravit istos dextera Altissimi.*" The context seems to demand the idea of *anger* rather than of *protection.*

f "The possessed ones."—The Sy. ܐܝܬܝ̈ܗܒ does not occur in the Lexicons in this sense, though Castell approaches very near it in the meaning *vexatus*. Benedict has *a malis spiritibus obsessos*, which the context seems to require.

g "He looked into."—ܣ points to a close inspection, as in 1 Peter i. 12, "Which things the angels desire *to look into.*"

h "Idolatry."—ܥܒܕܐ ܕܥܡܡܐ is properly *Gentilism*, the idolatrous practices of the heathen; used in 2 Macc. iv. 10 for ἑλληνικὸς.

i "The priest had entertained Moses."—Jethro, the priest, or prince of Midian. (Ex. ii. 16.)

j "The widow woman."—The widow of Zarephath, at Zidon, (1 Kings xvii. 9.)

k "David, honoured among the heathen."—As by Achish, king of Gath. (1 Sam. xvii. 2.)

l "Had abjured the idols of their fathers."—Sy., ܕܢܬܟ̈ܠ *the fearful things*, or *objects of dread*, used in the Old Testament in the same sense, as 2 Kings xvii. 16, Deut. xxxii. 16, for Hebrew words of different origin.

m "Tammuz."—This word occurs in the Old Testament only in Ezek. viii. 14. It is the name of a Syrian object of worship, the same as the Phœnician Adon or Adonis. The *weeping* spoken of here and in Ezekiel, refers to the fact that the feast in honour of Tammuz was held at the solstice, and consisted of two parts, —one dedicated to joy, the other to grief; the latter commemorating the disappearance of the god, the former his return. This idol appears to have been, in its idea, an incarnation of the sun.

n "The soothsayers and diviners."—For the first, see note *o*, Part IV. The Syriac word we have rendered *diviner* is ܢܣܝܥ *auspex, divinator;* one who pretended to foretell future events from certain phenomena.

o "Wizards and Chaldæans."—ܡܓܘܫ, rendered *wizard*, is the same as the Chaldee, דָּרְגֹּשׁ *magus, incantator.* On the Chaldæans, see note *p*, Part IV.

p "The altars of Asshur."—The Sy., ܕܒܚ, is properly *a burnt-offering, sacrifice*, like the Heb. עֹלָה, but the sense of *altar* is established by its use in Acts xvii. 23.

q "Built his altar near his door."—A reference to the strange multiplication of idolatrous customs in the worst days of the history of Israel. Thus we read in Hosea xii. 11, "Their altars are as heaps in the furrows of the field."

r "As a Church."—Sy., ܐܣܦ ܒܝܬ; the word being employed in its secondary sense, as *a place of meeting.* Benedict conveys the sense, but deserts the form of the Syriac; Jonah saw Nineveh "*suos velut in Ecclesiâ congregasse filios.*"

s "A den of robbers."—A quotation from the *Peschito* of Jer. vii. 11; a different word for *robbers* being used in that version of Matt. xxi. 13. The former is the Semitic ܦܪܨ, the latter ܟܣܝܢ, the same as the Greek λῃστὴς.

t "Jeroboam."—The mention of this name, in connection with

the calves, seems to intimate that Ephraem thought that Jonah and Jeroboam the First were contemporaries. But the reference is to Jeroboam the Second, in conjunction with whom Jonah is brought before us in 2 Kings xiv. 25: "He restored the coast of Israel from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain, according to the word of the Lord God of Israel, which he spake by the hand of his servant Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet, which was of Gath-hepher." The deliverance Jonah promised, seems to be the recovery of Damascus and Hamath, spoken of in the 28th verse of the same chapter. These historical fragments are thus ingeniously used to throw light on the mission of Jonah to Nineveh, in a work already referred to *(Blackburn's Rise and Fall of Nineveh)*:—

"This wonderful defeat of the king of Damascus was 'according to the word of the Lord which He spake by the hand of His servant Jonah.' That prophetic word had, doubtless, been heard by multitudes, and when its predictions were so marvellously accomplished in the overthrow of the legions of Syria, the fact that a prophet of Israel had foretold these things could not be concealed. The inhabitants of Damascus would hear of it to their confusion, and the people of Tyre, of Babylon, and Nineveh, would understand that indeed 'a prophet had been among them.' Observant readers of the Old Testament will remember how frequently Moses and the kings and prophets of Israel anticipated the spreading of the news of their triumphs among the Gentile nations, and the honour which would consequently redound to the Lord God thereby.... That the tidings of the defeat of the king of Damascus by the forces of Israel, according to the predictions of the prophet Jonah, should reach Nineveh, seems most natural; and that that intelligence prepared the way for his personal mission to the king and people of that proud capital, appears most probable."

[u] "Offered up their daughters to devils."—The Sy., ܫܐܕ̈ܐ rendered *devils* has the sense of *dæmones* given to it by Castell, but without any reference to the etymology. The quotation is from Deut. xxxii. 17, or Psalm cvi. 37, in both which places שֵׁדִים is used, on which Gesenius says, "*Idola, pr. domini, a radice*

שוד *dominari, unde Sy.* ܫܕܐ dæmon. *LXX. et Vulg.* dæmonia *et* δαιμόνια, *quandoquidem Judæi idola dæmones esse putabant, qui ab hominibus se coli paterentur.*"

v "There was perceived."—The Sy., ܚܙܐ *oluit*, conjoined with the object, cannot well be rendered literally in English, but the translation given expresses the exact idea of the original.

w "The fair savour."—We have given the word *fair* as the rendering of the rather unusual adjective ܫܦܝܪ, after Michaelis, who says of its use in 1 Kings vii. 29, *spectabile*, i. e., *pulchrum*, *intelligens*. Benedict omits the word altogether, and translates these four verses, 82—85: "*Nineven ubique spirare luctum; Sionem olere nidorem ac thura idolis adulta.*"

x "Among the Jews there was luxury."—The Sy., ܬܥܢܓ occurs once in the *Peschito*, Jude 12. The meaning, *to live luxuriously*, is supported by that passage, and also by the use of the verb in the Syriac version of the *Festal Letters of Athanasius*. In the text edited by Mr. Cureton, p. 48, about the middle, we read of the rich man spoken of in Luke xvi., "For a little time he here lived luxuriously, ܐܬܬܥܢܓ, but there he suffered hunger."

y "The living wept for the dead."—The allusion is to the idolatrous lamentations over dead persons, not to the expressions of natural sorrow. But, although the parallelism seems to require that this verse should refer to the Israelites, in a bad sense, it *may* be a mere general proposition: the living, *ordinarily*, weep for the dead, but in Nineveh the rule is reversed—they weep for the living.

z "His relative."—Sy., ܒܪ ܓܢܣܗ *the son of his race*—a phrase which, according to the analogy of many similar forms, means, *his fellow-clansman*, or *relative;* like son of his city, for *fellow-citizen*, son of his ministry, for *fellow-labourer*. See *Hymns and Homilies*, p. 55, note *a*.

a "Their tears flowed more abundantly."—Literally, *were opened like doors*, ܐܬܦܬܚ being *to open*, and *a door or gate*.

β "Their betrothed sons and daughters."—Sy., ܒܢܝ ܘܒܢܬܗ

ܒܥܠܬ ܒܬܘܠܬܐ. Castell gives both the masculine and feminine forms, and renders *desponsatus*, *desponsata*. Michaelis blames him for this, and asserts that the derivation of the word, *to sell*, as a daughter by the father, will only allow it to have a feminine usage. But here is a clear refutation of his opinion, an instance among many more of the way in which *à priori* conclusions in philology are refuted by the *usus loquendi*.

γ "Those who should bury them."—Literally, *their buriers; i. e.*, those who in the natural course of events would have performed that office.

δ "Who will close our eyes and enshroud us?"—In this and the connected verses are examples of technical terms, which although they convey but an obscure meaning to readers of other countries and ages, are well understood by the custom of those employing them. Thus ܣܟܠ is simply *claudere*, and did not then need the object *eyes* to be added.

ε "None would put on their shroud."—The *garments* of the preceding verse are probably those laid up against a burial, and this custom is alluded to in a passage quoted in the *Hymns and Homilies*, Introduction, p. lxvii.:—

> "And if thou givest up the ghost,
> They rise up for the wailing
> On account of thy departure;
> They wash and anoint thee,
> *They shake out the linen clothes.*"

The word ܠܒܘܫܐ rendered *shroud* is sometimes *nudatio*, *nakedness*, and Benedict translates the passage, *qui nudum operiret.* But different derivatives of ܠܒܫ are used for articles of clothing, and we prefer the version we have given.

ϛ "Each man grasped the dust."—This word ܩܒܥ is not found as a verb in the Lexicons, and we have relied on the rendering of Benedict, *terram quisque prensabat.*

η "It was all lamenting and weeping."—This and the preceding verse may be rendered literally: "There was no wailing

there, which was not wailed and wept." We have taken the two verbs of this verse as used impersonally.

θ "Being sprinkled with bitter ashes."—This is an obscure passage, rendered more so by the strong figure employed. Did the Ninevites hang the walls with sackcloth? If so, then the ashes thrown about by the mourners would adhere to it, and the meaning of the words is plain. Benedict, "*Ipsi parietes, ciliciis ferali cinere conspersis, affudere lacrymas.*"

ι "Loud noises clashed together."—The roughness of the Syriac of this verse might be better expressed thus: "*Clangor knocked against clangor.*"

κ "Be satisfied with his presence."—Literally, *be filled with his face or countenance,* ܣܒܥ ܒܐܦܘܗܝ. The same words are employed in Psalm xvi. 11, where, for the rendering of our version, "In thy presence is fulness of joy," the *Peschito* reads, "I shall be satisfied from the gladness of thy countenance." But with the same form of words, how widely different is the feeling conveyed in our text!

λ "Might descend together to the grave."—This verse concludes the varied descriptions Ephraem has given of the misery of the Ninevites, and he appears to have aimed at a climax, and has succeeded. In no part of our labours have we more strongly felt the difficulty of our task, and the impossibility of doing justice to the sententious brevity of our author.

Part the Seventh.

THE DAY PREDICTED BY JONAH PASSES, AND NINEVEH IS NOT OVERTHROWN.—JONAH IS DISAPPOINTED, THE NINEVITES BEGIN TO HOPE.—THEY GIVE THANKS TO GOD, EXPOSTULATE WITH JONAH, AND INVITE HIM TO REJOICE WITH THEM.—THEY FLOCK TO HIS BOWER, AND HEAR THE CONVERSATION BETWEEN HIM AND GOD.

As soon as the days were accomplished,
They stood together at the gates[a] of death,
Embracing one another.
The day had arrived which cut off hope,
In which wrath should be consummated;
The night drew on, even that which came
After the six weeks.[b]
While still weeping, they reflected,
"In what hour will the city be destroyed?
Will it be thrown down in the evening,
Or will its ruin take place in the morning?
In what watch will come upon us
The sound of the dreadful earthquake?"
They thought that the city would fall at even,—
The evening came and it yet stood;

They thought they should be swallowed up at night,—
That night they continued among the living;
They expected the overthrow in the twilight,[c]—
The twilight passed and they were not destroyed;
They thought the city would fall in the morning,—
The morning came and their hope increased.
At the season when they expected to be no more,
Suddenly salvation was theirs!
Each man looked for his friend,
And longed after his companion.[d]
For forty days the earth had not ceased
To tremble with earthquakes.[e]

Jonah stood afar off,
And feared lest he should be a deceiver,
For the earthquake and the trembling ceased.
At the moment when hope was cut off,
The good news of mercy were afforded,
For they looked upon a token of grace.
By this sign they were made glad
That the earth ceased from quaking;
The lightnings and thunders became silent,
The ear and the eye were refreshed;
The GOOD, who had looked upon their tears,
Had pity on their lives.
But although they died not, they were tormented,
While living they had tasted death.
Through those six weeks
It was better to the dead than to them;
For as the living they had life,

Yet were as unburied dead men.
The brother met his brother,
And did not recognize his form;
A man met his companion,
And could not discern his countenance;
The ear could not distinguish
One voice from another;
Neither could the eye see the difference
Between form and form.
Like shadows of the gloom
Had they become through their misery;
They were scorched up like brands[f]
By that severe fast.
Their bodies had wasted by watching;
Only the skin and skeleton[g] remained.

The time when Jonah had expected
That now the city would be overthrown,
In that very day and hour
It was delivered from destruction;
The cloud and darkness on a sudden
Were dispersed and passed entirely away;
There was now tranquillity and increasing hope,
The dead city came again to life.[h]

Great vexation clothed Jonah,
But the Ninevites had a cheerful countenance;
A hope was afforded to them
When they saw the sky was brightened.
They bowed their knees in prayer,

They stretched out their hands to heaven.
Every mouth uttered thankfulness,
And every tongue spake praise,
To Him who when angry had returned to them
Their life;—through their repentance
They were reconciled to the Lord of heaven.

"Thou hast gladdened us, Thy people on earth,
By raising us up from the dust,
That we may live a new life.
Through Thy hands we have obtained
Those good things which have happened to us.
Thou hast not disappointed us in this,
That thou wouldst turn us from condemnation to life;
For in Thy hand we discovered
The key of repentance,
So that from among the divine treasures
A good hope has been given to us.
What would it have profited[i] thee, O Hebrew,
If all of us had perished?
How wouldst thou have been the better, O preacher,
If we had all been slain?
What wouldst thou have gained, O son of Mathai,[j]
If we had been put to silence in the grave?
Why shouldst thou thus be afflicted
Who hast become renowned by our repentance?
Why should it grieve thee, that thou hast healed us,
So that the whole people should return thee thanks?
Why shouldst thou be sad on this account,

That thou hast gained our city?
Why dost thou mourn, O conqueror,
That thou hast triumphed among the penitent?
This shall be thy lot, to be spoken of
As a restorer and not a destroyer.
Let this suffice for thy happiness,
That thou hast gladdened the angels[k] on high.
It becomes thee to rejoice on earth,
For God rejoices in heaven.[l]

"Let thy mind exult in this,
That all men confess thy God;
In this let thy spirit be consoled,
That the city and the King reverence[m] thee.
Behold our youth who have been delivered,
Are praying, in return, for their saviour;[n]
See the little children who are preserved,
How thy remembrance will be great among them.
Bless the city which is saved,
From which chastisement has passed away!
O Jonah, bless the city,
Which shall henceforth be called by thy name!
For six weeks together
Thy mouth has abstained from its food,
Quit thy fasting, and let thy sorrow pass away;
Be glad with us, O son of the Hebrews;
This is a great festival,
Whose memorial shall be through all generations;[o]
Generation shall relate to its fellow
Our woe and our deliverance."

Such things as these they said,
And greater things than these.
Jonah sat without the city,
And the whole people went forth to him;
And they heard one questioning him,
And Jonah also replying.
The Holy Ghost who by his mouth
Was reasoning with him against himself,[p]
Spoke in two different persons with him[q]—
That of God, and that of the prophet.
The whole city heard
The prophet, who was speaking
Concerning his gourd and himself,
And concerning his Lord and His city;[r]
And they heard him contending
With his Lord on account of His city.
From him therefore there were heard proceeding
Voices of two different kinds.[s]
Hail to thee, O Hebrew intercessor![t]
Ministering to thy double self.[u]
Great multitudes came together[v]
To listen to the voice of the prophet,
And they heard him saying,
In their own language before God,
That he was grieved and wished for death
Because of the withering of the gourd.

The Spirit of God replied,
Who by his own mouth contended with him,—
His tongue fought against him,

In the place of the person of God;[w]—
By him they listened unto God,
Speaking on behalf of the city:—
"Art thou, Jonah, displeased
Concerning a withering[x] gourd
For which thou didst not labour nor make it to grow,
Which a night made to flourish and to wither?
Let the gourd which has perished and dried up
Be compared with the city which exists.
Let the gourd be to thee a teacher,
And learn consolation from it.
From the rejected gourd take an example
Of the disposition[y] of divine grace.
Thou hast compassion on the gourd
I have compassion on the city;
For through thee it has become
A city of penitents.
Thou hast fixed thy bower in the earth,
But thou wouldst root up cities;
Thou wouldst preserve the despicable gourd,
But throw down the corner stone.[z]
Where is thy justice, O Jonah?
Dost thou compare the city with the gourd?
Thy kindness is towards the bower,
Thy cruelty towards the city.
The gourd which is given for food
Is more to thee than the eaters;
The gourd, made to decay,
Is preferred by thee to penitents.
Thou thinkest the leaves of the gourd

Are better than rational men;
The blossoms[a] and flowers of a gourd, 190
Than children and young persons!"

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a "The gates of death."—Sy., the *step* of death.

b "After the six weeks."—Six weeks would be forty-two days, and as forty days were specially defined by Jonah, the expression here must be considered a general one. The use of round numbers is common to all languages, and is especially common in the early eastern tongues.

c "The twilight."—Sy., ܫܪܪܐ, properly *darkness*, but here used for the period before the dawn. Benedict, *antelucano tempore*. In 1 Sam. xvii. 16, the participle ܡܫܟܡ is put for *the evening*, *vesperans*.

d "And longed after his companion."—The sense of this is not very clear. It may mean that the sudden assurance of deliverance induced every man to seek his friend, to converse with him on the change which had taken place. Benedict paraphrases the passage: "*Interea perstabant attoniti, sodalem quisque præsentem quasi absentem desiderabat.*"

e "To tremble with earthquakes."—This is a plain statement of what has been alluded to in various places before (see note *f*, Part II.), that supernatural phenomena were employed to bring the message of Jonah home to the Ninevites. The assumption is altogether unfounded, as far as Scripture is concerned, but the use of it proves that Ephraem could not otherwise account, morally, for the remarkable conversion and repentance of the people. It may be said that the earthquake is introduced artistically as a *Deus a machinâ* to heighten the effect of the composition, but such a device is altogether contrary to the general style and spirit of Ephraem. But see note δ, Part IX.

f "They were scorched up like brands."—The graphic description of these verses is lifelike, and there can be little doubt but

that Ephraem painted from nature. The numerous wars which then occurred, combined with defective economical arrangements respecting supplies of provisions, often gave an opportunity of sketching from the actual forms of men emaciated by starvation.

g "The skeleton."—ܦܓܪܐ is rendered by Castell and Ferrarius, *cadaver sine capite, truncus corporis*, and this is the only reference we have been able to find to the word anywhere, after a diligent search. *Trunk* would not be a fit translation here, and the connection points to that which we have given. Benedict, *ossium textum.*

h "Came again to life."—ܐܬܚܝ or, *was raised again*, the verb and its derivatives being used in relation to the resurrection of the body. But see Michaelis in Castell on the word.

i "Have profited thee."—A sense of ܟܠܐ which seems clearly defined here, but is not given in the Lexicons.

j "Mathai."—ܡܬܝ, for the Heb., אַמִּתַּי *Amittai*, is the form of the word in the *Peschito*.

k "The angels."—Sy., ܥܝܪ, found only in the biblical Syriac in Daniel, but of frequent use in ecclesiastical writers. The ordinary word for *angel* is ܡܠܐܟ See *Hymns and Homilies*, note *c*, p. 82.

l "For God rejoices in heaven."—An evident allusion to the parable of the prodigal son, Luke xv.

m "Reverence thee."—Sy., ܣܓܕ, properly *to bow down to, to adore*, but like the words of the same meaning in other languages, it is used for respect and reverence.

n "Their saviour."—Sy., ܚܝܗܘܢ *their life.* But the context demands that the word should be referred to Jonah, by whose preaching salvation had been secured.

o "Whose memorial shall be through all generations."—A prophecy of what has taken place in relation to Nineveh, but in a sense far different from that in which it was uttered! On the side of Jonah, in his relation to divine truth, the repentance of Nineveh as the result of his preaching has never ceased to be commemorated; but Nineveh itself was not long allowed to cele-

brate the events of its national history,—it was overrun by an enemy, destroyed, and for long ages forgotten. Perhaps, when the danger threatened by Jonah passed away, the king and his subjects were ashamed of the effect which a solitary Hebrew had produced upon them, and, like Pharaoh after similar displays of divine forbearance, returned quickly to their former evil ways. In that case the festival (presuming one was instituted) would soon fall into neglect, and some feeling of the kind we have mentioned may account for the absence of any record of Jonah and his mission in the discovered monuments of Nineveh. But this is prejudging the subject, since but a fragment of the volume of Nineveh's history has yet been unrolled and deciphered.

p "Was reasoning with him against himself."—The inconveniences arising from prying too closely into the modes of divine communications are illustrated by this passage. When we read in the Scriptures that God spake to a prophet, we generally take the statement in its simplicity, without attempting to discover in what way the message was conveyed, or the reported conversation carried on. But Ephraem, in this case, adopts a different course. He has come to that part of the history of Jonah, in which God reasons against his selfish peevishness, and, in order to make the people witnesses of a scene never intended to be disclosed to mortal eyes, has been driven to the use of a most improbable theory. He was unwilling to give an outward form to the divine presence, or to allow a voice to descend from heaven to speak with the prophet. He therefore makes Jonah exhibit the extraordinary phenomenon of giving utterance to two different and opposed classes of sentiments,—his own and God's. We are unable to say whether this was Ephraem's doctrine in relation to inspiration generally, or whether it was a suggestion of the present occasion to meet a difficulty. Certainly nothing could be more calculated than this theory to deprive of authority all our reported conversations of God with man. Let it once be conceded that there is nothing *ab extra*, no objective reality in such recorded revelations, and it is easy to refer them to the mind of him who is said to be the subject of them. Indeed, according to the description here given of Jonah, the conversation between him and the Spirit presents, exter-

nally, nothing more than a natural contention between passion and judgment. Jonah at one moment says he does well to be angry because of the gourd, and in the next he expostulates with himself against such selfishness. It will be seen at once by the thoughtful reader, how soon, on this principle, all revelations might be explained away.

q "Spoke in two different persons with him."—We have expressed this verse as literally as possible, but confess our idea of the meaning is not very explicit. *Both* his utterances are thus ascribed to the Spirit, whereas one of them bears the plain marks of a very human and sinful origin. Benedict translates the passage, "*Duas ergo Jonas agebat personas, Dei atque suam.*" But the verb is feminine, ܐܡܪܬ, agreeing with ܪܘܚܐ, *the Spirit*. We must here notice that ܐܡܪ has here the simple meaning of *to speak, to utter*, while it is ordinarily more specific, as *to speak in a barbarous tongue*, or *to whisper*.—See *Hymns and Homilies*, note *f*, p. 133.

r "His city."—That is, God's; because he had preserved it, and was now pleading on its behalf with Jonah.

s "Voices of two different kinds."—Literally, *daughters of the voice of two sides.*

t "Hail to thee, O Hebrew intercessor!"—We have rendered the interjection ܐܘ, *Hail to thee*, because our monosyllable *O* will not express its meaning fully. It is an expression of gratulation, as in *Hymns and Homilies*, note *k*, p. 133. Benedict, *Euge!* The word translated *intercessor* is ܣܛܝܢܐ, apparently of foreign origin, and not used in biblical Syriac. Castell renders it, *victor, intercessor*. The last sense is established by a passage in Ephraem, tom. vi., p. 534, E., "Let thy mercy become an intercessor on our behalf," ܪܚܡܟ ܣܛܝܢܐ ܠܢ.

u "To thy double self."—Literally, *who ministers to thee and to thee.*

v "Great multitudes came together."—Sy., *congregations congregations*. The word rendered *came together* is ܐܬܟܢܫܘ, from ܟܢܫ, of which Michaelis says, "*Est in Ethpaal*, proficisci, ire, venire."

w "In the place of the person of God."—*Person*, ܦܪܨܘܦܐ, seems to be used here expletively. Jonah speaks for God, that is, is inspired by Him. Benedict omits the verse altogether.

x "A withering gourd."—ܝܩܝܥܐ is properly *feeble, weak*, but will admit the sense here given. See Michaelis in Castell.

y "The disposition."—Sy., ܚܘܫܒܢܐ, on which see note *c*, p. 47.

z "The corner stone."—Sy., *the great stone;* probably a technical term.

a "The blossoms."—ܨܦܪܐ, according to the Lexicons is *a bird*, but we have taken the sense of *flower*, from the Heb., פֶּרַח, as required by the connection.

Part the Eighth.

THE NINEVITES PRAISE GOD FOR PLEADING THEIR CAUSE.—JONAH CEASES FROM HIS VEXATION.—HE IS CARRIED IN TRIUMPH BY THE PEOPLE, WHO LOAD HIM WITH PRESENTS WHICH THEY HAD VOWED IN THEIR TROUBLE.—JONAH'S HUMILIATION IN THE FISH AND HIS HONOUR AMONG THE NINEVITES ARE CONTRASTED.—THE KING ORDERS HIM TO BE CONDUCTED HOME IN ROYAL STATE.—THE NATIONS HE PASSES THROUGH TREAT HIM WITH REVERENCE.

THE city heard this, and with one voice
Ascribed glory to God,
Who had pleaded their cause,
And contended on their behalf.
He made the prophet to become an intercessor,
And he who had been their opponent in the cause
Now became the opponent of the court,[a]
Although unwillingly he justified them.
God had made his words of no effect,
That the citizens might be saved;
There was a change[b] of mind in Jonah,
That God might not be untrue.[c]
Righteous men ought not to be grieved;

At the repentance of the unjust;
Neither should the penitence of sinners,
Be displeasing to Jonah.

There was, further, a reason with Jonah,
Why the city should hear of its salvation.
To have concealed this from them, negligently,
Would have been offensive in him;
For the penitent did not know
How matters stood with them;[d]
And why justice was angry,
And why penitence had saved them.
Jonah had preached, that he might shew
How indignant justice was;
The dying gourd had declared
How merciful was goodness.
The people who had come to Jonah[e]
Uttered praise aloud,
For what they had heard with their ears,
And for all their eyes had looked upon.
With their ears they heard that severe one,[f]
With their eyes they saw the gourd;[g]
In the gourd which sprang up suddenly,
They beheld a sign which was not natural;
In its being cut down they thoroughly learned,
That grace abounds above all.

The Ninevites seized with affection
The preacher of Hebrew race;[h]
He was exalted in their hands,

And entered *the city* in kingly state.[i]
They seated him on a throne and bowed before him;
Great multitudes who had repented,
Brought to him their offerings,
And presented to him their tithes;
They brought and gave to him the vows,
Which they had vowed in their afflictions.
Children offered their zones,[j]
And young men their chains;[k]
They gave him their breast ornaments,[l]
Their girdles with their clasps.[m]
The King opened his great treasury,
And presented him with abundance of good things.
God, as the Merciful One,
Was praised by all mouths;
And by all mouths likewise
Jonah was blessed as the preacher.

A carriage then came and took up
The offerings and tithes;
Men then advanced,
Who should conduct him with honour
To the land from whence he came.
Jonah was raised on high, and entered *the chariot;*
Like a king or one of royal blood,[n]
The son of Mathai was exalted!

A fish bore him through the sea,
But a chariot[o] on the dry land;
He was humbled beneath the earth,

But now he was raised high above it;
Fishes went before him
When he journeyed in the midst of the deep;
But horsemen on the dry land.
The sea was cleft asunder when he descended,
But the land when he went up;[p]
The fishes of the sea there recognized him,
But the children of men on the earth.
There was a storm in the abysses of the waters,
But a great tumult in the city.
By a watery pathway he went down,
But ascended by a dry one.
The terrible monsters of the sea
Trembled on account of him;
But powerful cities made way for him·
When he went up.
The fish that swallowed him up was strong,
The King who received him was mighty;
The fish then made a path for him,
But the King made his road straight;
Fishes accompanied that great one,
But now horsemen the chariot.

The King of Nineveh hastened,
And sent couriers[q] before him;
Who should prepare for the prophet,
Stations[r] in which he might be entertained.
God pointed out to the fish,
The path in which he should go;
But the King shewed to the prophet,

The way in which he should travel.
With honour and presents
He went up, being renowned,
And all men went forth to meet him,
And reverently bowed before him.
Kings trembled in his presence,
Because he was the mighty preacher;
They met him with great honour,
From fear at his preaching.
Each city which saw him grew pale,
Lest he should enter and overturn it.
Thus he was honoured in the cities.
Nineveh became an example;
She was a mirror to the world,
In which justice might be viewed.

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[a] "The opponent of the court."—The Syriac is literally, "made their accuser the accuser of the house of justice;" by which technical terms we understand that Jonah, who once pleaded against them on behalf of justice, now took their part against justice.

[b] "A change of mind in Jonah."—Sy., *a repentance*, in reference to the etymology of the word, *a turning*, *change of mind*, *second thought*; as in Heb. xii. 17: "For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance;" Gr., μετάνοια; Sy., ܬܘܒܬܐ. That is, Esau could not induce his father Isaac to change his mind, and bless himself instead of Jacob.

[c] "That God might not be untrue."—Had Nineveh been destroyed after the repentance of the people, although Jonah's

prediction would have had a literal fulfilment, yet God's promise to receive returning sinners would have been falsified. Jonah is therefore represented as laying aside his first angry emotions, for a sounder state of mind. See Romans iii. 4, "Yea, let God be true, and every man a liar."

d "How matters stood with them."—Sy., ܐܝܟ ܗܘܬ ܠܗ ܒܗ̈ܘ̈ *how affairs walked* or *proceeded.* This verse and the five preceding ones are somewhat obscure to us, as to the exact sense they are intended to convey. Ephraem appears to say that besides Jonah's regard for the truth of God, there was a reason on the part of the Ninevites which induced him to lay aside his peevishness. This was the necessity that they should be instructed more fully as to the causes of their danger and of their deliverance; a kind of information which, as a prophet, it would have been offensive or abominable, ܣܓܝ, in him to withhold.

e "Had come to Jonah."—Sy., *had entered* ܠܘܬ *to the side,* or *near to him.*

f "That severe one."—Sy., ܩܫܝܐ. See the observations on the verb ܩܫܐ, note *s*, p. 15.

g "The gourd."—The two words used in other places for *the gourd,* ܩܝܩܝܘܢ ܕܝܠܝܐ, are here separated and used as though they were synonymous terms for the same thing. See note *b*, p. 79.

The meaning of these verses we suppose to be this. It was not the gourd itself, but the lessons connected with it, to which the Ninevites had just listened, which conveyed to them so much instruction and consolation. In its miraculous growth and sudden destruction they saw, as taught by the Spirit of God, the nature of God's dealings with them. Its "cutting down" shewed them that God had wrought a miracle in order to teach Jonah and them that it was proper he should "spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand, and also much cattle."

h "Of Hebrew race."—Sy., *the son of Hebrews.*

i "In kingly state."—Sy., *in honour like a king.*

j "Their zones."—We cannot find this word ܙܢܐ in the Lexicons, but ܙܢܪܐ is given by Castell as *cingulum*, and Benedict renders it here *zonas*. This sense is established by a passage in Asseman, *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, quoted by Michaelis; and also by the Arabic زنار which Freytag says appears to be the same as the Greek ζωνάριον. If it had not been conjoined here with *children*, we might have supposed that purses of money were intended, the *contents* of the girdles, according to the custom of the East. But probably the girdles of children were often richly ornamented, and the whole is here put for a part.

k "Chains."—Sy., ܡܨܟܢܬܐ, as in Gen. xli. 42, "And Pharaoh put a gold chain about his neck."

l "Their breast ornaments."—The word ܥܕܝ is only found as *munus*, *donum*, a sense established by Bernstein from many examples. The Syriac, of frequent occurrence, for *breast* is ܕܝܐ, while here the word is ܕܥܝܐ with ܥ, a form in which we have been unable to find it elsewhere. Benedict evades the difficulty in a very careless manner. We have ventured to translate ܥܕܝ as *ornaments*.

m "Their girdles with their clasps."—ܡܟܙ is doubtless a *girdle*, but what is ܟܠ, which we have rendered *clasp?* We can find no clue to the reply, unless it is the Hebrew unused root תָּכָה, *adjunctus*, *conjunctus fuit*. ܟܠ is given by Castell, but only as the balustrades of a building, Cant. iv. 4.

n "One of royal blood."—Sy., *the son of a king*.

o "A chariot."—Sy., ܡܪܟܒܐ; a word which we cannot find with this sense. It seems to be the same as the Latin *currus*. It is remarkable that there are two words signifying *chariot*, either of which might be presumed to be displaced from the text of Ephraem by an error of a scribe or of the press. According to Castell, ܡܪܟܒܐ and ܡܪܟܒܐ both mean *currus*, especially that which is drawn by two horses. It is plain that these three words are all capable of being referred to one origin, since their differences are so easily attributable to clerical errors. Yet this is

not to be decided upon rashly; the last, ܩܪܘܟܐ, at least has authority, for Michaelis says, "*Est sine dubio* carruca."—See his interesting note on the word in Castell. Is not this the source of the English *carriage?* Or do all these words come from *currus?*

p "But the land when he went up."—The tumultuous joy of the people is here said to rend the land. Now in 1 Kings i. 40 we read, "And all the people came up after him (Adonijah) and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, *so that the earth rent* with the sound of them." Here the same verb, ܒܩܥ, occurs as in Ephraem, and we may safely conclude that he had the passage in the *Peschito* in view.

q "Sent couriers."—The word ܐܓܓܪܐ occurs in Eph. vi. 20. for *a herald*, or *ambassador*. (It is printed with ܝ by a *lapsus preli* in Castell, p. 22.) Michaelis says it is peculiar to the Syriac and Chaldee, being wanting in the sister dialects.

r "Stations."—The word ܡܬܘܒܐ is written with one ܘ in John xiv. 2, 23. Bernstein, who has a long article on the word, renders it, *locus commorandi*, *diversorium*, *hospitium*.

Part the Ninth.

THE NINEVITES ACCOMPANY JONAH TO THE BORDERS OF HIS OWN COUNTRY.—THEY WISH TO ENTER IT AND TO CONDUCT THE PROPHET HOME.—JONAH, FEARFUL LEST THEY SHOULD WITNESS THE INIQUITIES OF THE ISRAELITES, ENDEAVOURS TO DIVERT THEM FROM THEIR PURPOSE.—HIS ANXIETY ON THIS SUBJECT DESCRIBED.—HE IS GUILTY OF FALSEHOOD AND DECEIT.—THE NINEVITES YIELD, BUT HAVING PARTED FROM JONAH THEY ASCEND A HILL TO GET A DISTANT VIEW OF THE LAND.

WHEN Jonah arrived at his country,
To the border of the children of his people,
He dismissed those who accompanied him,[a]
That they might depart from him[b] in peace;
For he feared[c] lest they should see
The idolatry[d] of his countrymen;
And lest the penitent, entering among them,
Should be corrupted by the ungodly;
And lest, coming from the heathen,
They should learn iniquity from *his* people.
He hesitated[e] lest should break out again,[f]
The wound which was closed up[g] and healed.

For the bad example of private persons[h]
Causes the children of men to stumble;
How much then must his example injure,
Who falls from a high station!
And if a modest man may corrupt others.
Although the wrong is very private;
How bitter is the injury
Of him who presumptuously offends!
For he who is daring in his violence,
Instils his leaven into others;[i]
For his intercourse and acquaintance,
Make others to possess his impudence.[j]

Jonah therefore feared the people,
Who, corrupt themselves, corrupted all others;[k]
Lest the reformed[l] from among the heathen,
By coming among them should be injured.
But he blushed to dismiss them
Publicly, without reason;
Yet, should he foolishly neglect the matter,
He dreaded their going with him,
Lest the seed of Canaan entering in
Should contemn the sons of Abraham.
Jonah therefore returned thanks[m]
To the party accompanying him;
He saluted[n] them affectionately,
He freely[o] gave them his blessing;
He exhorted them in wisdom,
He gave them sweet counsel,
That they would yield to the advice given them,

And be obedient to the word of his mouth.
He entreated them much, but they did not regard it;
He prayed, but they paid no reverence;[p]
He counselled them, but no one tarried;
He kissed and dismissed them, but none remained behind.

"We will go with thee to thy home,
That we may derive from it great benefits;
We will learn from it its manner of life,[q]
Its ordinances, and its rites.[r]
We will learn righteousness in thy country,
From the people residing in it;
We will be taught purity in it
By the holy race dwelling there.
We will learn illustrious deeds
From the renowned which are in the midst of it.
We would enter and see the glorious people;
We would enter and see the elect ones;
We would enter and look upon the land
In which Faith makes her abode.
We would enter and see the place
To which idolatry has not reached.
We would enter and see, and give thanks
That there is no incantation.
We would enter and contemplate their Sabbaths,
When they cease from evil things;
We would enter and see the circumcised ones,
Who, with the body, have circumcised their heart;
We would enter and see the blessed,

Among whom iniquity does not reside.
A people that blame others,
Can have in them nothing sordid;
A people that accuse abominations,
How far must they be from hateful things.
A mirror, themselves, unto others,
How fair must they be!
Those who teach fasting to strangers,
Can they live in dissipation?[s]
Those who teach truth to others,
Can they practise falsehood?
If they have despised us for our sins,
Who can treat them with contempt?[t]

"Deprive not then, O Hebrew,
Our company of these benefits;
Through thee we have become penitent,
By thee let us be made righteous;
In return for the toils of our feet,
Grant that we may enter with thee.
We will receive and carry from thy place
Fair examples to our city;
We will enter and look on the young men,
A pattern full of good order;
We will enter and receive from the lads
Most profitable illustrations;
We will enter and see their King,
That ours may become like him;
We will also look upon your judges,
And take their example to our country."

But who is able to enumerate[u]
Whatever these penitents uttered?
And when they had said these things,
And others greater than these,
Jonah heard and was silent,
And bowed his head to the ground.
For he blushed for the children of his people,
The iniquitous and flagitious.[v]
This was worse to the son of Mathai
Than the affair of the gourd,
When the sun glowed upon his head,
And his soul sought for death.[w]
If he fled, where could he find rest,
And whither should he retreat if he entered a ship?[x]
These men troubled him more
Than those who took him up and threw him in the sea.

How could Jonah conceal
The blemishes of the children of his people?
He completed his guileful conduct[y] at the sea,
By his pretexts[z] upon the dry land;
As he falsely persuaded
The mariners when he took to flight,
So he used lying[α] arguments,
When separating from the Ninevites.

Jonah seized hold of excuses,
And constructed his abundant wiles:—[β]
"There is a great feast," he said, "in our country,

And a stranger may not enter it;
It is a festival of the children of the land,
And there is no part in it for the heathen;
It is a great feast of the circumcised,
And the uncircumcised may not walk there.
For although ye are penitent,
Ye have not yet been circumcised;
That holy feast would be profaned,
By *the presence of* the uncircumcision.
Depart then hence quietly,
And return to your land in peace;
After a season ye may come again,
When the festival is accomplished.
Receive our counsel obediently
And despise not our request."

The simple people received from him,
The exhortation he offered in their presence;
They parted from him, and did him reverence,
And received his blessing.
The whole assembly was sorrowful,
And departed from him weeping;
Because of the untoward event
Of the feast which Jonah had mentioned.
Jonah did not fear so much
For the great falsehood *he had practised,*
As he trembled for the possibility
Of their refusing to remain behind.
When Jonah was a long way off,
And they were still on the border,

They saw a high mountain
Near where they remained;
And they reflected, and took counsel,
Quickly to go up it;
And, as far as possible, to look upon
The land which was before them.[δ]

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a "Those who accompanied him."—Sy., *the children of his company.*

b "Might depart from him."—ܫܒܩ is primarily *to remain*, but construed with ܡܢ, as in this verse, it is *to depart from any one.*

c "He feared."—This is a sense of ܕܚܠ which seems to be established by this passage, although it is not given in the Lexicons. *Verecundus fuit* is the nearest meaning we have found, but that will not express with sufficient force the feeling of Jonah.

d "Idolatry."—Sy., *the heathenism.* See note *h*, p. 80.

e "He hesitated."—We have not been able to find this sense given to ܙܥܙܥ, though its general meaning *to move*, *totter*, at once points to it in this connection.

f "Should break out again."—Sy., ܐܬܪ, the general sense of which is *obruit*, *proruit*, *destruxit.* Benedict translates, *ne refricaretur*, lest it should be torn open.

g "Closed up."—ܣܟܪ *to seal up*, *close*, is used in a medical sense in Levit. xv. 3.

h "Private persons."—Sy., ܦܪܛܝܐ. On this word see note *d*, p. 47. The sense in this place is evidently *obscure*, *humble*, *unknown.* Bernstein gives *rudis*, *vulgaris*, which although very near to the meaning in this place, do not convey the exact idea.

i "Instils his leaven into others."—Literally, *buries* it, a figure

taken from the fermenting material being buried in and surrounded by that which it is intended to influence. See Gal. v. 9: "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."

j "Make others to possess his impudence."—The last twelve verses will remind the classical reader of the impressive aphorisms of the Greek tragedians, so often introduced with great effect in the narrative portions and the choruses of their works. There is this difference, however, that the Greek writers are contented with expressing their meaning in one pithy sentence, while Ephraem amplifies and puts his thought into many different forms.

k "Corrupted all others."—The word ܫܚܬ has clearly the meaning, *to corrupt*, in this passage. The nearest illustration of it we have been able to find, is quoted by Michaelis in Castell, and also by Bernstein. It is used of locusts who *corrupted* the corn; not only eat it, but wasted and injured it too.

l "The reformed."—Sy., ܐܬܬܩܢ, used of the restoration of the withered hand in Mark iii. 5.

m "Returned thanks."—The Syriac form for this common phrase is very peculiar, more so than the Latin *ago gratias*. It is ܩܒܠ ܛܝܒܬܐ, literally, *to receive a favour*, and the meaning here is thus traced by Bernstein:—"*Accepit gratiam alicujus; h. e., usus est gratiâ, beneficio, alicujus; gratiam habuit; gratias egit alicui.*"

n "He saluted them."—Literally, *kissed them.*

o "Freely gave them his blessing."—We have rendered ܒܚܢܡ *freely*, after Castell, who gives as one meaning *alacriter*, quoting Eph. v. 15. But it is there put for ἀκριβῶς, *carefully*, *circumspectly*, which establishes the reading of some MSS. ܒܫܦܝܪ. Benedict has *sanctè*.

p "Paid no reverence."—Sy., ܠܐ ܚܫܝܒ, which Benedict renders, *puduit eos negare.*

q "Manner of life."—Sy., ܐܝܟܢܘܬܐ, used in the *Peschito*, 2 Tim. iii. 10, for ἀγωγή, rendered *manner of life* in the English version.

r "Its rites."—The word ܩܕܝܫܬܗ has this meaning given

to it by Castell, but probably a more general idea may be conveyed by it in this place. It is as extensive in its use as the Greek σχῆμα, from which it is taken. *Fashion, manner, or mode of a thing*, are some of its meanings.

s "Can they live in dissipation?"—Sy., ܐܣܩܘܠܝܐ, the Greek ἄσωτος.

t "Who can treat them with contempt?"—The cutting sarcasm of this whole passage is well executed. It has, perhaps, the fault of appearing to be uttered by the Ninevites satirically, whereas the intention of Ephraem is to make it the result of their honest simplicity.

u "To enumerate."—ܣܡܪ is *finivit, terminavit.* Michaelis quotes a passage in which it is *enumeravit*, like the Chaldee סנך

v "The flagitious."—Sy., ܚܕܝ, which does not appear to be known as a verb. It is used for ἀνόσιος in 1 Tim. i. 9.

w "His soul sought for death."—This, and the preceding verse, are almost exact quotations from the *Peschito*, excepting that there we read, *he sought death to his soul*, or *to himself*, Jonah iv. 8. Ephraem doubtless used a copy of that version, and probably the reading here was different from that now found.

x "Entered a ship."—Sy., ܣܠܩ *to go up*, which we here presume to be a technical term, signifying to go up into a ship. But it must not be concealed that in Jonah i. 3, the opposite term is used, ܚܬ, *he went down into it.*

y "His guileful conduct."—Sy., ܒܢܟܠܗ *his guiles.* It appears from this that Ephraem thought that Jonah had used some artifice with the mariners of the ship which was to take him to Tarshish. The way in which they appear at once to have turned to the prophet as the cause of the storm, seems indeed to imply that there had been before something suspicious in his conduct.

z "His pretexts."—The Sy., ܥܠܬ, generally *a cause* or *occasion*, is used for προφάσις *a pretence*, in Luke xx. 47.

a "Lying arguments."—This is strong language, but it is quite conveyed by the original, ܟܕܒ ܘܐܫܬܕܠ, *he lied and argued*, or *persuaded.*

β "His abundant wiles."—Literally, *he multiplied and constructed his wiles.* Benedict, *composuitque insuper artificia.*

γ "Because of the untoward event."—Literally, *because of the event and the opposition.*

δ "The land which was before them."—Sy., ܩܕܡ; one meaning of ܩܕ, as given by Bernstein is, *præsens est, adest.*

We confess to having experienced a very painful feeling while reading the account here given of the deception practised upon the Ninevites by Jonah. The character of the prophet was before open to animadversion, as faithfully depicted in the Holy Scriptures, but our readers will all agree, that nothing said of him there conveys anything like the idea of moral turpitude here brought before us. What is the sum of the prophet's faults as recorded in the book of Jonah? First, he was disobedient to the divine command; and secondly, he was so anxious for his veracity as a prophet, that he lost sight, for a time, of the far greater matter, the salvation of a whole people on their repentance. Those who remember that God's most favoured messengers have always been *men of like passions with themselves*, will not interpret too harshly these undoubted frailties, nor will they find it difficult to suggest circumstances by which the guilt of the prophet may be extenuated. Moses was reluctant to appear before Pharaoh, and Jeremiah sadly lamented the necessity which was laid upon him of being a prophet. Then, *some* measure of natural regard for his character, as one sent of God, may be allowed to soften down his selfish peevishness. Indeed, it would not be difficult, on good grounds, to present the faults of Jonah in far less high relief than they generally appear in to superficial readers.

But now what does Ephraem do? He not only gives great prominence to Jonah's morbid regard for his own honour, but also insinuates that when he fled from his post in the first instance, he used unworthy artifices to induce the mariners to take him to Tarshish. This is bad enough, but the gross falsehood he is made to practise upon the unsuspecting Ninevites is a gratuitous and unfounded blot upon his character of a most damning kind, and we cannot too strongly express our disapprobation of the way in which the good name of a prophet appears to be sacrificed to a poe-

tical artifice. This must be our excuse for entering more fully into the subject than a note would seem to warrant. Our great admiration of Ephraem's genius and piety makes us disposed to regard with favour all his compositions. Can this matter be explained, so as to allow him to escape with clean hands?

It may be imagined that Ephraem was indebted to tradition for his information respecting Jonah, not found in the Scriptures. This is possible, although it is surprising nothing of the kind has had publicity in the history of the Church. Certainly, in the neighbourhood of Nineveh we see to this day proofs of the great interest taken in him, and perhaps, in the earlier ages, fictitious narratives, or even truthful traditions, may have existed, and been used by Ephraem. In a discourse like this, evidently written for an audience, it does seem unlikely that he should introduce so important a portion of Jonah's history, unless his hearers were acquainted with it. If the Syrian Christians derived all their knowledge on this subject from the Book of Jonah, they would not be prepared to hear him so gravely charged with lying, and their feelings of reverence must have been shocked by the statement of this Homily. But, on the other hand, if all that Ephraem relates were already known to them, no different effect would be produced on them by it, than is upon ourselves by the faults which are recorded in the Bible;—they would merely think Jonah a worse man than we do.

Another suggestion may be allowed. In the prayer of Jonah recorded in the second chapter of the book bearing his name, we read this sentence in the English version:—"They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy." Now this is sufficient to furnish a clue to Ephraem's attributing artifice to Jonah in his dealings with the sailors, provided he read a similar sentiment in his copy of the Scriptures. In the *Peschito* the translation of the passage is:—"Those who observe or regard vain fears," لا ܕܡܬܢܛܪܝܢ ܒܛܠܐ ; which may refer to Jonah's foolish doubts and apprehensions which induced him to flee to Tarshish, but can scarcely be construed as intimating anything like a strong tendency to deceit and lying.

Still, on either supposition, it is remarkable that Ephraem makes

no comment on what seemed to demand strong reprehension. We cannot therefore resist the conviction that in this matter, as in another noticed at p. 66, note *c*, Ephraem was led astray by a peculiar species of ethics, by which the Church was so early infected and injured. What was done for *the honour of God* was thought to be taken, by the mere force of the *motive*, out of the ordinary course of things, and the actions of God's public servants, as recorded in Scripture or preserved by tradition, were tried by a different rule from that applied to private persons. We have already remarked on the way in which Ephraem speaks of cases of adultery and fornication occurring among the Israelites, (see p. 48, note *h*.) We feel then unable to reject the idea that this whole passage is wrong in its spirit, and that it furnishes an illustration of the fact, so often exhibited in the writings of the Fathers, that they, like ourselves, were exposed to mistakes, errors, and moral imperfections; and that an immeasurable space lies between their writings and *the true sayings of God.* It would require more than such testimony as is here furnished, to make us add the smallest additional portion of blame to Jonah, above what is attributed to him in the Bible.

Part the Tenth.

FROM THE TOP OF THE HILL THE NINEVITES BEHOLD THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE ISRAELITES.—THEY SEE THE CALVES OF JEROBOAM, NUMEROUS IDOLATROUS ALTARS, AND THE LICENTIOUSNESS OF THE WORSHIPPERS.—ALL SEEM GIVEN UP TO SATAN.—THEY ARE HORRIFIED AT THE SIGHT.—THEIR CONVERSATION ON THE SUBJECT.

They thread the mount[a] and gain its top
That they might see the land of promise;
That although they might not enter it,
They might not be deprived of the sight of it.
They ascended, and cast their eyes below,
And viewed the whole country.
They trembled and were affrighted,
And mortal pangs laid hold upon them;
For there were altars upon the hills,
And images[b] upon the high places.
Among the groves[c] there was idolatry,
Among the oaks[d] there was uncleanness.
Carved images[e] were near their doors,
And as they entered they worshipped them.

Their idols[f] were without number,
And their vices could not be reckoned.
By their fountains there were purifications,
And washings by their streams;[g]
Upon the housetops there were their statues,[h]
And their whoredoms in the gardens;
Soothsayers walked the streets,
And enchanters[i] filled the ways.

They ascended higher and looked upon their roofs,
And the altars were innumerable;[j]
One was worshipping a graven image,
Another poured out libations[k] to a demon.
Within their borders there were set up,
The calves made by Jeroboam;
One was placed in Beersheba,
And the other in Dan.[l]
Incense there ascended,
And drink-offerings[m] and holocausts.
Before those dead calves
Living calves were sacrificed;
And before his graven image and idol[n]
Every man struck his head.[o]

Avarice was also there,
And its companion, Oppression;
There was Prodigality,
With its sister, Intemperance;
There was Lasciviousness,
With its ally,[p] Fornication;

There also was Falsehood,
And its kinsman,[q] Robbery;
There was Incantation,
And its close confidant,[r] Magic;
There also was Chaldæism,
And its acquaintance,[s] Soothsaying;
There was public Injustice,
And its yoke-fellow, secret Wickedness.

There they witnessed crime in public,[t]
The injustice and oppression of the inhabitants;
Men were associating with the harlots,
The mother stood with her daughter and daughter-in-law
Like snares in the streets.
Death altogether reigned there,
With Satan his fellow-king.
There princes were iniquitous,
And their judges flagitious.[u]
Covetousness among them was like a fire,
And greediness of gain as Gehennah;
Their habitations were a deep ditch,
And their temples a whirlpool.[v]
The borrower was like a fiery pit,[w]
And the creditor as Satan;[x]
They both were vexing[y] one another
Who would go to one torment.
Even their children were swearing[z]
By the names of their gods.
Among the heathen there was one portion of evil,

But with them ninety and nine.[α]
Who was able to oppose himself,[β]
To the compact mass[γ] of their crimes?
They had multiplied the number of their offences
As satyrs,[δ] the children of Semolo.[ε]

The Ninevites were filled with horror,
And trembled at the iniquity they saw.
One man said to his fellow,—
"Is what we look upon a dream?
Is this the land of promise,
Or are we contemplating Sodom?
Is this the race of Abraham,
Or are we looking upon devils?[ς]
Are these we see men,
Or unsubstantial shadows?[η]
Surely the iniquity which has fled from us
Hath but changed its place and come hither;
The idols which we there brake in pieces
Are here restored again;
The altars which we pulled down
Have obtained wings and fled hither;
The pestilence which hath ceased in our land,
How eagerly is it here desired!
The star[θ] which we have rejected,
How is it here adored!
Soothsaying, which is humbled among us
Here walks at large;[ι]
The idolatry which hath departed from us
Here looks out of all windows;[κ]

The signs of the zodiac,[λ] which we have blotted out,
Are here painted upon their doors.
The arrogance[μ] which we have cast aside,
Here resides on their foreheads.[ν]
The lasciviousness which we have deserted,
Has its dwelling in their looks;[ξ]
It is visible in their eyes,
And perceptible in their nostrils.[ο]
The sun, which is not worshipped yonder,[π]
How it is here treated with honour!
The calves, which elsewhere are thought lightly of,
How are they here adored!
But if we say that our customs
Have fled, and behold they are here,
There are, further, many new ones,
And entirely abominable;
For here are vile things,
Which in our land did not exist;
Here sins are wrought,
Which among us were not committed.

"Micha introduced the form
Of the idol with four faces.[ρ]
In our country no man sacrifices
To a brazen serpent and worships it;
But among this people there resides
The curse of the old serpent;
They are execrated like the living serpent,
Who sacrifice to the dead one.
We do not immolate our children to devils,

But here we see they are slain;
Brute animals are sacrificed by us,
But here their daughters are offered up.
How vile is the mode of life
Of the people who have such saviours!
How licentious are the actions
Of the people who have such customs!
How execrable is the education
Of those who have such parents!
If such is the god of the people,
They will desire graven images.—
Thus a nation which has but one Creator,
Is a maker and seller of idols!

"These boast in names alone,
Because they are called the children of the upright;
It suffices to them that they think
They are named the sons of Jacob;
By pious titles which they put on
They foolishly believe they shall be justified.
Their name is spread abroad through the world,
With their sinful actions.

"They think they are righteous children,
On account of *their father* Abraham;
But that they have on them the name of Israel,
Is but the pride of words.
Their whole boast is this,
That they are circumcised, although they are sinners;

But their manner of life does not resemble
That of the true children of Abraham.
The name of Abraham is greater in their esteem,
And his circumcision is far greater
Than the faith which he possessed.
The Sabbath, which God gave them,
Is exalted by them above God.
They even complain of God,
As though He should abrogate His laws,
And they should appoint a law
Even to the Lawgiver Himself;
They would be without the law themselves,
But God should be subjected to it.
With them the law is superior
To Him who appointed it;
Not that they may observe His law,
But that they may blame the giver of it.
In their eyes Moses and the prophets
Are inferior to sacrifices;
Their whole glorying is in slain-offerings,
And their pride in incense.
It is sufficient to these arrogant ones,
If they are sprinkled with blood and filth;
They think *God* loves the incense
More than the simple truth He has taught them."[v]

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[a] "They thread the mount."—The Sy., ܣܡܨ is generally, *fixit, infixit;* but in Pael *serpsit.* The similar root in Hebrew

סָבַךְ is *plexuit, implicuit.* The idea is, that of pursuing the crooked and uneven ways which almost always lead to the top of a hill, and *to thread* is expressive of such an ascent.

> "Thus out of season *threading* dark-eyed night."
>
> *Shakespeare.*
>
> "They would not *thread* the gates."
>
> *Ibid.*

b "And images."—Sy., ܨܠܡ̈ܐ has this meaning given it by Castell, *casula, capsula, tabernaculum idolorum,* and is found in Lev. xxvi. 30, and Ezek. vi. 3, 6, for the Heb., בָּמוֹת *high places,* which cannot be the meaning here, since *high places* are mentioned in the same verse. Gesenius says, that as on the high places shrines were erected in honour of the gods, the word בָּמָה was used sometimes for the shrines or cells, by a metonymy. This may explain the apparent discrepancy between the Hebrew text and the *Peschito.*

c "The groves."—Sy., ܐܫܪ̈ܬܐ, from ܐܫܪ *plantavit.*

d "The oaks."—Sy., ܐܠ̈ܘܢܐ, which is often used in the *Peschito* for the generic term *tree.* But the corresponding Hebrew word is rendered *the oak* by the consentient voice of ancient and modern interpreters.

e "Carved images."—Sy., ܦܣ̈ܝܠܐ, from ܦܣܠ *sculpsit.*

f "Their idols."—The word ܓܠ̈ܘܠܐ is of constant occurrence in this sense. Bernstein says it is of Persian origin, and signifies *a dumb idol.*

g "Washings in their streams."—A reference probably in part to the general ablutions observed in worship, and also to religious rites performed to the gods supposed to preside over fountains and streams.

h "Their statues."—We have adopted the translation of Benedict for the Sy., ܩܠ̈ܘܣܐ, not because we are satisfied with it, but from the want of a better. The word does not occur in the Lexicons, but we presume it is the same as ܩܠܣ, which is of frequent use for *a cord, string, nerve.* From the occasional mean-

ing of the Latin *nervus*, and the parallelism of the next verse, we suspect the allusion is to some obscene rites of idolatrous worship.

i "Enchanters."—Or, *those who had familiar spirits.* ܐܚܙܢ is used in Lev. xix. 31, for the Heb., אוֹב, which the LXX. usually render by ἐγγαστριμύθος, *ventriloquist*, and the English version by *one having a familiar spirit.* In his *Commentary on Leviticus (Opera*, tom. iv., p. 246, A), Ephraem has these remarks on the word. He cites as his text, "Ye shall not follow after *those who speak from the belly*, ܕܡܬܟܠܡ ܡܢ ܟܪܣܐ;" and then gives this exposition, "Those who *speak from the belly* are a kind of soothsayers, called by the Syrians ܐܚܙܢ *Zackyræ*, who are miserable women into whom demons enter, and who, like children, utter shrill notes from the stomach, etc., and thus deceive those who listen to them."

It is worthy of enquiry from what quarter Ephraem derived the Syriac text which he thus explains. The passage of Leviticus referred to, appears to be chap. xix. 31, but there, and in all other places where this species of divination is spoken of, the Syriac word ܐܚܙܢ is employed. Ephraem is in fact explaining a paraphrase or gloss, not the text of the *Peschito.*

j "Altars were innumerable."—This mention of the use of altars on the flat roof indicates how deeply idolatry had pervaded the people.

k "Poured out libations."—Or, *offered sacrifice*, since ܢܨܒ is both *libavit* and *immolavit.*

l "The other in Dan."—See 1 Kings xii. 29.

m "Drink-offerings."—ܢܣܟܐ is so used in the Old Testament, Lev. xxiii. 18.

n "His graven image and idol."—This appears to be a Hendiadis for *his carved or graven idol.*

o "Every man struck his head."—This sounds awkwardly, but it is the exact rendering of the Syriac ܢܨܚ. The meaning is, that he bowed his head so as to touch the ground, as expressed by Benedict: "*Unusquisque reverentiæ causâ vertice terram quatiebat.*"

p "Its ally."—Sy., *the daughter of its yoke.*

q "Its kinsman."—Sy., *the daughter of its race* or *family.*

r "Its close confidant."—Sy., *the daughter of its secret.*

s "Its acquaintance."—Sy., *the daughter of its familiarity.*

t "Crime in public."—Literally, *crime which was set up*, or *exhibited*, ; in opposition to that secrecy, the laying aside of which is the worst sign of entire profligacy. We have taken the noun in the singular, though it is marked as plural in the printed text.

u "Flagitious."—See note *v*, p. 114.

v "Their temples a whirlpool."—As this is said in connection with avarice, perhaps the meaning is, that both at home and in public the one grand object was to overreach one another, so that both hospitality and religion were made to engulph and destroy the victims of extortion and robbery. The word rendered *temples* is , which we think must be an error for . Neither of these forms is given in the Lexicons, but is *mansit*, which is somewhat allied to *a dwelling, mansion.* Benedict renders, *ædes*, which may signify *houses*, but we have preferred the other signification, *temples*, as avoiding a tautology.

w "A fiery pit."—Sy., , *fovea plena igne*, Castell. Probably an allusion to the ovens made in the ground in the East, or to furnaces, and ovens generally, as Benedict translates, *clibanus succensus.*

x "The creditor as Satan."—This is an awful description of the mutual hatred of debtor and creditor in countries where the law gave the latter unlimited power over his victim, and, consequently, where the former would use every art to overreach those to whom he was indebted. In most cases, it would be contrary to the interests of the lender to proceed to extremities with the person indebted to him, and the passions excited by the hopes and fears connected with the risk incurred, made the borrower able to inflict pangs, the foretaste of perdition, upon the creditor. Then, on the other hand, the lender, like Satan, would fetter his subject with every art in his power, until the tormentor and tormented would both receive the punishment of their crimes in hell!

y "Vexing one another."—The word we have rendered *vexing is* ܗܨܨ, which in no way that we can discover, will cohere with the other parts of the verse. If we presume there is a very likely error committed, and that the true reading is ܗܕܨ, all difficulty is removed. Benedict, "*Se invicem ambo torquentes.*"

z "Their children were swearing."—This is the climax of national degradation, when the example of parents, which should have a restraining influence upon their offspring, becomes an encouragement to their crimes. The habit of profane swearing by boys, in their ordinary games, in the streets of large manufacturing towns of England, tells an unmistakeable tale of a downward course of public morals.

α "With them ninety and nine."—That is, the sin of Israel was ninety and nine times greater than that of the heathen.

β "Who was able to oppose himself."—The Syriac ܣܟܝܢ is generally *to rebel*, but Michaelis suggests that it has the more extensive sense of contumacious resistance. Here the general meaning is established of *resistance, opposition.*

γ "Compact mass."—ܐܙܛ does not occur in the Lexicons, but ܐܙܟ is *coarctavit, strinxit;* and Bernstein gives ܐܙܛܛ, *turba, compactus globus hominum.*

δ "As satyrs."—There is a clear example here of ܠ being used for *qualis.* The rule is thus given by Bernstein: "*Præcedentibus nominibus* multum, ingens, vehemens *significantibus, est* qualis, quale."

ε "Semolo."—This verse has presented to us a formidable difficulty, which we are not sure we have been able to overcome. The Syriac is ܠܒܢ ܕܫܡܠ ܣܡܣܐ, which literally translated is, "Like young goats, the sons of the left hand;" or as Benedict has it, "*Hœdi filii sinistræ.*" But this is unintelligible. We have supposed the goats to be satyrs, called *capripedes*, from the lower part of their form being like a goat. Semolo we have considered a proper name, which we find in Schindler, who says of סַמְאֵל "*Est Asmodai, nomen dæmonis.*" Now the rendering of *goats* by satyrs is justified by a reference to the Hebrew שָׂעִיר

which, signifying *a hairy one*, is applied first to the *goat*, anp then to a *satyr*. Gesenius says of the שְׂעִירִים that they are "*dæmones sylvestres*, satyri, *hircis similes*," *satyrs like to goats*. The word is found in Isaiah xiii. 21, and in that place the *Peschito* renders it by ܫܐܕ̈ *demons*, which passage in the English version is, "And satyrs shall dance there." Since then the satyrs may be intended here by the Syriac word which means *goats*, and satyrs were thought to be *demons*, we have only to examine whether ܣܡܠܘ *Semolo* may be the same as the Asmodai found in the rabbinical writers as the prince of the demons. We think the quotation from Schindler given above is proof enough of this, since the word, if rendered *the left hand* conveys no sense at all. The meaning of the whole passage thus seems to be, that the Jews had committed more or greater crimes than the satyrs, the children or subjects of Semolo or Asmodeus their prince. That Asmodeus and Sammael are the names of the same being may be seen in Moreri, *Dictionnaire Historique*. With the views of the orientals as to the demons, their crimes would be esteemed of the deepest dye, and this will account for the comparison here instituted by Ephraem. We confess the interpretation we have worked out has been viewed by us with some diffidence, on account of Benedict being evidently at a loss as to its meaning. But this is only one instance out of many in which we have found him at fault on subjects which we might have expected him to be familiar with.

ζ "Devils."—Sy., ܫܐܕ, a word applied to the devil, according to Michaelis, from the meaning of the root, *to be black;* an idea which appears to have almost universal credence. That there have been exceptions appears from the following passage in Sir Thomas Browne's *Enquiry into Vulgar and Common Errors* (Ed. 1686, p. 270):—"Whereas men assume this colour (black) was a curse, I cannot make out the propriety of that name, it neither seeming so to them, nor reasonably unto us; for they take so much content therein, that they esteem deformity by other colours, describing the devil, and terrible objects, white."

η "Unsubstantial shadows."—Sy., *spirits like shadows*.

θ "The star."—Sy., ܟܘܟܒܐ, the common form being ܟܘܟܒ. The allusion is to Amos v. 26, where the *Peschito* reads, "the star which ye have made a god for you." This star is now agreed by the best authorities to have been the planet Saturn, worshipped and propitiated by the Semitic nations along with Mars.

ι "Here walks at large."—Sy., *has a wide street to it here.*

κ "Looks out of all windows."—Idolatry which, in a better state of society, hid itself in secret chambers, now grew so bold as to court notice rather than seek concealment.

λ "The signs of the zodiac."—Sy., ܡܙܠܐ, which Castell considers the same as the Hebrew מַזָּלוֹת by a metathesis. This opinion is discountenanced by Michaelis. These, or some of them, appear to have been written or painted on the houses for idolatrous purposes.

μ "The arrogance."—Or perhaps, *impudence*, the hardened front of bold sinners. See Michaelis in Castell, and also his observations on the word in his *Supplementa ad Lex. Heb.*

ν "On their foreheads."—Literally, *on* or *about their eyes.*

ξ "Their looks."—Sy., *in the pupils of their eyes*, from which organ so much expressiveness is derived to the whole countenance.

ο "Their nostrils."—Benedict renders this and the two preceding verses, "*Lascivia in horum oculos invasit; hanc pupillæ loquuntur et nares.*" In a state of society where the emotions of the mind are less restrained in their manifestations than among ourselves, the nostrils exhibit much silent meaning. This accounts for many allusions to the nose in the Hebrew Scriptures.

π "Yonder."—The Sy., ܗܘ, which appears to be used here δεικτικῶς, evidently refers to Nineveh, because the sun was worshipped in other countries.

ρ "The idol of four faces."—A reference to the account of Micah in Judges xvii. and xviii.; but the *Peschito* of those passages gives no information on this subject; nor does Ephraem say anything about the form of the idol in his *Comment on Judges.* The *teraphim* are no doubt intended, but we can find no reference

to their being four-faced. Perhaps they were presumed by Ephraem to be of the same form as the cherubim. Benedict, "*Quadrifrontem Deum Micha invenit.*"

σ "The education."—Sy., ܐܠܦ̈ܐ *the bringing up;* but it may be rendered the *increase* or *offspring:* so Benedict, "*Quorum tales parentes, talis item et soboles.*"

τ "Their name is spread abroad."—The Sy. ܦܫܐ has not this precise meaning in the Lexicons. Benedict, "*illorum nomen fusum est.*" *To be poured out* is the general sense, but *to be diffused* in the sense of extending or spreading is established here.

υ "More than the simple truth he has taught them."—In this speech of the Ninevites, Ephraem has given a very correct description of the state of the Israelites before their captivity, and also of the Jews in general in the decline of their national greatness. The accounts given in the historical books and the prophets cannot well be exaggerated by other writers, since everything which is bad is predicated of the apostate children of Abraham, who, in proportion as they receded from his faith and piety, blindly boasted of him as their father.

Part the Eleventh.

HAVING SEEN THE WICKEDNESS OF THE ISRAELITES, THE NINEVITES RESOLVE TO RETURN TO THEIR OWN COUNTRY.—WHILE HONOURING JONAH, THEY CONDEMN HIS COUNTRYMEN, WHO BOAST THEMSELVES OF THEIR RELATION TO ABRAHAM, WHILE THEY ARE IDOLATORS.—THEY SING A SONG OF PRAISE TO GOD, AND CALL UPON ALL CLASSES OF THE PEOPLE TO JOIN THEM.

The penitents, while thus conversing,
Said these things concerning the Hebrews;
And, although they greatly desired
To ascend higher, and look upon the land,
They now entirely abhorred it,[a]
They trembled and fled from it.
Mortal pangs seized them,
For the crimes they witnessed there.
The sins they had approved, but now repented of,[b]
The Hebrews had clothed themselves with;
The idolatry which the heathen had cast off,
This abominable nation had taken up.
Each man said to his neighbour,—

"Come let us escape from this place,
Lest we be swallowed up with its evil deeds,
For this is a rebellious people.
In Nineveh we may have good confidence,
But here there is great peril.
Perhaps this people is about to be extirpated
In place of Nineveh which has not been overthrown;
But in truth it is already
A nation plucked up by the roots;
For these are not the once fair people,
Since they have arrayed themselves in our abominations.
As to this blessed prophet,
His memorial shall be great among us;
For he was the cause of our salvation,
And obtained for us all this benefit."
Having said this where they stood,
They turned and descended with fear;
Those happy men departed thence,
And returned home rejoicing.

Then they all sang distinctly,[c]
While sincerely rejoicing,
This song of praise to God,[d]
Who was reproving his people by the heathen,
Who were justified from their sins.—
"Let thankful voices ascend to Him,
From the impure who have repented and been cleansed;
Let us present to Him pure fruits,
From minds which are enlightened;[e]

Let the wrathful and the rash
Offer to Him a new song,
And praise Him with the intellect;
Let even the licentious ones render thanksgiving,
And praise Him because they are made chaste.
Let the covetous praise Him,
Because He hath taught them to give alms;[f]
Let the profligate praise Him,
Because they have been instructed how to fast.
Let the drunken praise Him,
Because they have learned to drink in moderation;[g]
Let the rapacious praise Him,
Because they have now become givers;
Let the adulterers praise Him,
Because their consort suffices them;
Let the whoremongers greatly praise Him,
Because they are freed from their lust.

"Let the daring of our country praise Him,
Because they observe the limits of righteous persons;
Let the prodigals praise Him,
Because they have gained judgment and intellect;
Let the profane cursers praise Him,
Because their mouth has learned to bless;
Let the orphan praise Him,
Because He has become his patron;[h]
Let the widow bow down before Him,
Because He hath heard her oppression in His kindness;

Let the beggar praise Him,
For He hath filled his basket with blessings.[i]
Let the husbandman also praise Him,
Because He hath again bound his yoke,[k]
And filled him with abundance.
Let the ploughman praise Him,
And the vine-dresser offer Him a song;
Let the artificers praise Him,
Who work in their various trades.[l]

"Let our kings praise Him,
As they see their cities in peace,
And their crowns are again in quiet;
And let the armies praise Him,
Which have been delivered from destruction;
Let the rulers praise Him,
Who have returned again to their offices.
Let the rich praise Him,
Who can again look upon their treasures;
Let the fathers praise Him,
Who have enlarged their hope of their children;
Let the sons also praise Him,
For the sight of their parents.
Let the innocent children praise Him,
Because their life is prolonged;
Let the little ones praise Him,
Because they are carried on the shoulders.[m]
Let the pregnant women there praise Him,
That the fruit of the womb hath not perished;[n]
Let the brides praise Him,

Who are introduced joyfully to their chambers;
Let the new made mothers[o] praise Him,
For they are blessed with their sucklings;
Yea, let the nurse[p] praise Him
For the blest babe[q] upon her bosom;
Let the virgins praise Him,
That they have been preserved from ruin.

"Let the judges greatly bless Him,
Because they are not judged according to their own sentences;
Let the exactors bless the Good,
Because it has not been required of them according to their extortions;
Let the usurers[r] sing praises,
Because their debts have not been demanded;
Let the creditors[s] bless Him,
That the bills of their debts are torn up.
Let robbers render praise,
That they have not reaped as they sowed;
Let the rapacious give thanks,[t]
That they have suddenly become benefactors.
Let the offender and the offended[u]
Greatly praise God;
Let them praise together in harmony,
That they have been equally benefited;
The offender that he has not been blamed,
And the offended that he has been preserved.[v]
Let them give thanks in strong towers,[w]
Because their dwellings tottered;

Let them multiply praise in castles,[x]
Because they were delivered from destruction.
Let their maid-servants and their men-servants,
Give many thanks and utter praise;
For their bondage is far better
Than freedom in the sepulchre.
Let the mother rejoice and be comforted,
For she can look again on her beloved one.
Let all stations of every kind,[y]
Offer praise with great joy;
Because they are delivered from perdition,
And become new born!"[z]

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[a] "Entirely abhorred it."—Sy., *they were so satisfied and abhorred it*, so filled with abhorrence.

[b] "The sins they had approved, but now repented of."—This verse is very obscure in the original, on account of its great terseness, and the peculiar allocation of the words. It reads, حقلا ܕܚܛܝ ܕܚܙܝ *the iniquities which the penitent had seen, or looked upon.* We have taken the verb ܚܙܐ in the sense of *surveying with favour or approbation*,—a meaning which is given to it by Castell.

[c] "They all sang distinctly."—Sy., ܒܚܕ̈ܕ̈ܐ *with distinction, discrimination;* but we are not clear about the exact use of the word in this place.

[d] "This song of praise to God."—Benedict begins the song at the next verse:—"Magnificemus Deum, qui per populos gentiles Hebræum populum confudit; Illius nomen prædicent in primis peccatores, quoniam justitiam adepti sunt, immundi quicumque per pœnitentiam suas eluerunt sordes." This whole passage is

very intricate in the original, and, to us at least, seems to want a *lucidus ordo;* but this may arise from some peculiarity of the metrical style not well understood.

e "From minds which are enlightened."—ܒܟܝܐ may be *accensus, inflamed with gratitude,* or *illuminatus, enlightened.* Benedict entirely omits this and the preceding verse.

f "Taught them to give alms."—Benedict gives the sense, but not the literal rendering; "*Et liberaliter agere edocti avari.*" The Syriac is, *taught them alms,* ܐܝܕܘ. See note *i*, Part I.

g "To drink in moderation."—Sy., *by measure.*

h "His patron."—Sy., *because he is to him as a* ܣܝܡܐ, one who stands up for him.

i "Blessings."—The note of Michaelis in Castell on the word here used, ܒܪܟܬܐ, will explain its peculiarity;—"This word *benediction* is also *a gift*, because one was accustomed to be presented, in the oriental fashion, by those saluting one of superior station when they sought access to him. Thus, in the *Chrestomathy*, it is said, 'The faithful, approaching Bar Hebræus, put into his hands baskets full of silver *as a gift* (ܒܪܟܬܐ *a blessing*). But afterwards the word was used more generally for any gift. Thus Ephraem, in his commentary on Gen. xviii., says, that Abraham prepared so much bread and meat, not to satisfy the hunger of the angels, but that he might present *gifts* (blessings) to all his domestics."

k "Hath again bound his yoke."—Literally, *because he hath added and bound.* The expression is elliptical, meaning that God allowed him to bind his yoke again upon his oxen. But Benedict paraphrases it, "*Agricola, qui, accedente uberiori proventu, auxit juga boum.*"

l "Their various trades."—Sy., ܩܘܡܢܝܐ, is properly *sacerdotium, the office of a priest.*" The Syriac Lexicons give no such meaning as is here required. One meaning of the Heb., נָמַר, is *plexit, texuit, to plat or weave*, and this comes nearer though it is too special.

m "Because they are carried on the shoulders."—A beautiful

touch of real life, referring to the constant use made of the shoulder in the East, and also to the way in which a babe or young child is playfully exalted on the shoulder of its parent or nurse.

n "Hath not perished."—Sy. ܠܛ is *rupit, disrupit*, and the word may allude to the results of grievous fear, which had been averted by the goodness of God.

o "The new made mother."—Sy., *those who have brought forth.* Benedict seems to have mistaken the verse, for he renders it, "*Matres filiarum benedictionibus gaudentes.*"

p "The nurse."—Sy., *she who gives suck.*

q "The blest babe upon her bosom."—Or, *the babe who is blessed upon her bosom*,—the action of blessing from the mother being alluded to. This is painting from nature, for who has not seen the affectionate looks and heard the tender words which a mother lavishes upon her scarcely conscious infant.

r "The usurers."—Sy., *the takers of interest.*

s "The creditors."—Sy., *the masters of debts*, as in verse 21, Part I.; see also note *h* on that passage. In both these places Benedict refers the expression to *borrowers*, which the connection will not allow in the former place, and is not required here, although this passage certainly will admit the rendering, *debtors.* See note ϵ, p. 167.

t "The rapacious."—These two verses are almost identical with the fifty-third and fifty-fourth above; and the repetition indicates a carelessness which would not be likely to be exhibited by Ephraem, if he had corrected his copy. But perhaps we have here the reading of an early MS., which might be altered in a later one. The distance of the two places will scarcely allow us to attribute the repetition to a scribe.

u "Let the offender and the offended."—Sy., ܡܚܝܒܢܐ ܘܡܬܚܢܢܐ. The former is easily understood; *he who causes offence by censorious or objurgatory language;* but the use of the latter word is peculiar. It is, literally, *he who is pitied*, or *obtains favour or mercy.* He is here the passive recipient of the action of the ܡܚܝܒܢܐ. It may mean, *he who supplicates for pity, deprecates* the anger or displeasure of another. Benedict, "*offensor et offensus.*"

This verse and the 114th above are remarkably contrasted in relation to the metre. They are both correctly heptasyllabic, without aphæresis or diæresis, yet the first contains twenty-one consonants, the latter only twelve. We will print them together as an exercise in the metre for the students of Syriac.

ܕܠܐ ܢܨܘ ܐܝܟ ܕܙܪܥܘ ܐܝܟ ܕܚܨܕܘ.

Dló ' chtzádv váu aýk dázráhv váu.

"That they have not reaped as they sowed."

ܡܟܝܢܐ ܘܡܬܬܟܝܢܐ.

Mákyónó 'vméthchánnónó.

"The offender and the offended."

v "Been preserved."—The offender, that in the destruction of Nineveh, he was not visited with the punishment due to his offence, —and the offended, that he has been preserved from a far greater evil than the reproach of a fellow-man.

w x "Strong towers and castles."—Sy., ܡܓܕܠܐ and ܚܨܢܐ.

y "All stations of every kind."—Sy., *all stations with all stations*.

z "New born."—Sy., *new children*, ܛܠܝܐ. This ends the account given by Ephraem of the Ninevites, who, he very properly allows us to presume, were permanently benefited by this remarkable event in their history. The events recorded in the Book of Jonah could not have happened without producing deep impressions upon the people; and while our knowledge of human nature convinces us on the one hand, that with many of the people their repentance was but transient in its effects; on the other, it makes us believe that in numerous cases it was followed by a godly life.

The Conclusion.

EPHRAEM COMPARES THE REPENTANCE OF THE NINEVITES WITH THAT OF HIS HEARERS, AND CONCLUDES BY BLESSING GOD.

COMPARED with the repentance of the Ninevites,
I have called ours but a shadow.[a]
A penitent who has truly feared,[b]
In the midst of safety is earnest in well-doing;[c]
When he is a little filled with hope,
Every day he remembers his chastening.
A servant whom his master corrects,
Through all the day is mindful of his stripes.
Every man while fearing, is circumspect,[d]
But the wrath passes over, and he forgets it;
At the beginning of wrath there is repentance,
But when it is finished there is rebellion;
As though it sufficed to him to hope
That the calamity will not return;
Or as though the Almighty had assured him
He will not again punish his folly.

Now the Ninevites at that season

Repented with all their hearts;
The whole city gave Him thanks
Which had so long been quaking;
The whole city pronounced Him blessed,
For like a ship it had been agitated.
Both rational and brute creatures praised Him,
The children of men and the beasts of the field;
Instead of sackcloth they had white garments;
They were reformed in newness of heart.

Blessed be He who loves the righteous,
Who multiplied penitents in Asshur!

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a "But a shadow."—The reference is to Part I., where the comparison is followed up at some length. See note *p*, p. 14.

b "A penitent who has truly feared."—The word rendered *truly* is ܐܡܬܐ *veritas*, here used adverbially.

c "Is earnest in well-doing."—Sy., *does well much.*

d "Is circumspect."—Sy., *full of his eyes;* the only time we have met with the phrase.

Studied by the ordinary rules of oratory, it must be confessed that this peroration is not equal to the discourse which it concludes. There is apparently a want of that forcible application of which, in other places, Ephraem has shewn himself to be a master. But it must be remembered that this piece, while intended for an auditory, was more historical than didactic in its artistic construction, although intended all through to have a practical bearing on the hearers. There was a continued reference to the circumstances of the hearers; an indirect yet powerful appeal to their profession of religious principles and their virtual neglect of them, which made any formal address at the close unnecessary. Perhaps also the length of the discourse forbad any further enlargement.

In the third volume of the Roman edition of the works of Ephraem, in the Latin version of this homily from a Greek translation, there is the following addition, of very doubtful genuineness: "And those who, in the first instance, repented through the preaching of Jonah, were saved; but those who came after them and became worse than their ancestors, altogether perished, as saith the prophet Jeremiah. Therefore, let us also praise God, who by the Ninevites hath given us a type and a pledge, that, as he delivered them by Jonah, so he saves the nations by his only begotten Son, but will blot out his people, that barren fig-tree, which is a stumbling-block to the heathen, so that it cannot be saved by the fruits of repentance, through Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom be glory and power and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

End of the Repentance of Nineveh.

"Lord! Thou art the hope of the penitent,
And the friend of all sinners."

"Answer me, Lord, as Thou didst answer
Elias when he prayed before Thee;
Hear my prayer, O Lover of the penitent,
As Thou heardest the voice of the son of Mathai;
Answer and deliver me, as Thou didst Simon Peter,
That I may not deny Thy name.
Although I have greatly sinned,
Confess me, O Lord, who have confessed Thee,
Thou Fountain of Mercy and of Grace.

"Jonah called on Thee in the depths of the ocean,
And Daniel in the den of wild beasts;
In the furnace which the Chaldæans kindled,
The three children cried to Thee.
Thou didst draw out Jonah and deliver Daniel,
And Thy grace moistened and quenched that flame.
Pity me, Lord, and make me to live,
That I may give thanks to Thee;
And pardon my sins in Thy great goodness!"

Parœneses ad Pœnitentiam.

An Exhortation to Repentance.

By

Ephraem Syrus.

"The cherubim bear aloft
That Mighty One who sustains all things;
They direct their view downward
With reverence beneath Thy chariot,
Veiling themselves, and fearing
To look at that which is in it;
They bear Him up and yet cannot investigate,
And, though near, they are full of awe.
Blessed is he who hath been taught
By them, the honour due to Thee,
Whose praise is mixed with reverence!"

Adversus Scrutatores.

AN EXHORTATION TO REPENTANCE.

Part the First.

THE GREAT VALUE OF REPENTANCE ILLUSTRATED BY THE CASES OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS AND THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS. — THE REPENTANT ARE ENCOURAGED TO APPLY TO CHRIST BY THE NUMEROUS EXAMPLES OF THOSE WHO SINNED, AND YET WERE SAVED BY FAITH. — CHRIST COMPARED TO A PHYSICIAN, AND THE PENITENT TO A SICK MAN.

O Lord,[a] I am a suppliant to Thee;
Thou Good! I am knocking at Thy door;
Break not, O Lord, Thy promise,
"Knock, and I will open to you."[b]
Thy door is not closely fastened
When[c] the sinner comes and knocks at it;
Thy door is always opened
To the righteous and the wicked.
Thou shewest Thy door to the sinner,
That he may call, and knock, and enter.
Thy love encourages the enquirer,
That he may be eager for Thy treasures.

Behold, I ask as Thou hast taught me,
Lord, give me according to Thy promise;
Behold, I knock as Thou hast advised me,
Lord, open to me according to Thy word.
O Lord, I ask not for gold,
For it is the mammon of unrighteousness;[d]
Neither for treasures and possessions,
For they procure not salvation.
Forgiveness is better than gold,
And the remission of sins than much silver;[e]
And poverty without sins,
Than a wealthy inheritance.
The rich man there[f] is conscious
That he would exchange all his gold
For the crown of poverty[h]
Of Lazarus the beggar.
For man can take nothing with him
When he dies, as it is written.[i]
And since he would sell all he hath
For one drop[j] of water,
Which of these two should a man take
From the door of the tomb and onwards,[k]—
The labour of righteousness,
Or the servitude of sins?

Thou hast instructed me, O Lord,
By the foolish and the wise virgins,
What merchandize[l] I should take with me,
That Thou mayest open Thy door to me;
And since those who yet were virgins[m]

Were not received for want of oil,
Who will there give to me, a sinner,
An alms[n] of his oil?
The foolish virgins are an example for us,
And the rich man is a mirror,
That we should resolve now[o] to pray
For grace rather[p] than for justice.
While there is a healing balsam
For the hidden ulcers of our sins,
And a physician who brings remedies
For the wounds of sinners,
The practitioner[q] is unjust who withholds
The medicines[r] from the distempers;
For on a sudden justice may close
The wide door of grace.

I hope that repentance will cleanse
The great sore which has befallen me,
And that goodness will cover up
The hateful and foul stain;
Because Jesus the physician cries,
"O man, thy sins are forgiven thee,"[s]
And abundantly bestows health
To the soul and body of the sickly;—
And because the crucified[t] King carries
The key of the gate of Paradise,
And opens[u] it without stint
To robbers and murderers;—
And because the Father of Mercies says,
"Behold, my son was dead and yet lives;

He was lost but hath come again[v]
From the snares[w] of sinners;"—
Because also the fatted calf was slain,
By its blood to cleanse from blemishes;
And a glorious robe was brought forth,
That the wounds might be covered by it;—
Because I may come as the thief,
Confessing and inheriting Paradise,
And as the harlot in her sins,
Who annulled[x] the charge against her with her tears;—
Because there is hope for sinners,
That they may be healed by repentance;
And for publicans and covetous persons,
That they may be justified by faith;—
I will enter into intimacy with Zaccheus,
That I may confess Thee and be justified,
And with the polluted harlot,
Who wept before Thee and obtained mercy.

By those who were foreigners,[y]
But became of Thy family[z] by faith,
I have been taught, O Lord,
The loving-kindness of Thy disposition.[a]
By the domestics of a judge
Each man may learn his character;
And from the ordinances of a prince
His tenderness may be known;
By the disciple, his instructer
Is believed to be true and faithful,

If he loves strangers
And desires the intercourse of the holy.

Thy habitation is full of sinners,
And extends a hand to the penitent;
It casts forth the net of its teaching
Upon those at home and those abroad.[β]
Paul cries out from within,
"I am the chief of sinners,
That through me Jesus may shew to all men
The long suffering of His grace."[γ]
Peter, weeping, was made whole
After he had denied, and become a stranger.
Aaron, though a sinner, was justified
After he fashioned the calf,[δ] and became polluted.
David, that wise physician,[ε]
After he sinned, fell sick;
He confessed that he believed[ς] and was healed.
Princes and mighty men of war[η]
Were overcome in battle and were restored.
Who can cover his eyes
From the mirror of the Scriptures,
And not find medicine for his malady
In these troops of penitents?

Pains, and trespasses, and sins
Surround me, Lord, on all sides;
And there is no physician like Thee
To whom I can recount my diseases.
Lord, not on account of the righteous

Was Thy advent to the world,
But for the sake of sinners,
That they might be reconciled by repentance.
It is not on behalf of the healthy
That the physician compounds his medicines;
But for the sake of the sick,
That they may be made sound by his care.
"The whole need not a physician,"[θ]
As Thou hast said, O Lord;
Nor do righteous and perfect men
Require the balsam of repentance.
For all physicians, Lord,
Heal diseases by medicines;
But without drugs and balsams
Thy love is prompt[ι] with all men.
For sinners such as I am
Need, Lord, remission of sins;
And he whose distemper is like mine,
Earnestly begs for health.
A physician is made friendly with a fee,[κ]
And then is careful of his patients;
But the sick, who comes for refuge unto Thee,
Is healed and bears away the reward.[λ]

And even the paralytic, who was unable
To come and shew Thee his malady,
Thy kindness led Thee near his couch,
And quickly dispersed his complaint.
O Lord, Thy goodness goes forth
After the foolish and the erring,

And doubles its speech[u] to the scorners,
Saying, "Scoff not at your sins!"
Thy love subdues the rebellious,
And thy teaching the ferocious;
And for those who have long been lost,
Thy mercy labours that they may be found.
"Come unto me," Thy love exclaims,
"O ye who labour for vanity,
And with heavy burdens;
And ye who are wearied with evil desires,
From me learn tranquillity,
And receive from me meekness;
My yoke is pleasant if ye are willing,
And my burden is very light!"[v]

This beautiful piece is printed in the sixth volume of the Roman edition of Ephraem's works, and is the second of a series of homilies, entitled, *Paræneses, seu Adhortationes ad Pœnitentiam, (Exhortations to Repentance.)* They are seventy-four in number, and on a great variety of subjects. They are referred to in the Introduction to the *Hymns and Homilies*, p. lxxiii., and some of them are inserted in that volume. This piece is in heptasyllabics; it is divided very carefully into strophes of four verses, and also into portions of various lengths, according to the subject and connection. We have only retained the latter arrangement. The division into Parts, like those of the *Repentance of Nineveh*, is our own. For observations on the style and spirit of this homily, we refer our readers to the Introduction.

[a] "O Lord."—There are two forms of this address, ܡܪܢ *our Lord*, and ܡܪܝ *my Lord*, which are here used indiffer-

ently. It is stated as a rule, that the first is more frequently applied to kings and to Christ: the latter to private persons as a token of respect. See Michaelis's long note in Castell.

b "Knock, and I will open to you."—A quotation, in a somewhat varied form, from Matt. vii. 7.

c "When."—The Syriac is ؟ and the sense of *quum* is given and established by examples in Bernstein.

d "The mammon of unrighteousness."—The expression is taken from the *Peschito* of Luke xvi. 9. The Syriac here reads *unrighteousness* twice, which we presume is an intensitive form. Benedict renders, *Mammona iniquitatis est, et ipsa iniquitas.*

e "Much silver."—Sy., *silvers*, an emphatic plural.

f "The rich man there."—The adverb ܗܟܝ is much used by Ephraem, and in a manner requiring that the reader should supply information on the subjects treated of. In this case the *there* refers to the account of the rich man and Lazarus, and their destinations, in Luke xvi.

h "The crown of poverty."—The happiness which, in a very important sense, is said by our Saviour to have resulted from the low estate of Lazarus. Benedict translates the words, *inopia simul et corona.*

i "As it is written."—The quotation is literally exact from the *Peschito* of Psalm xlix. 17. The similar sentiment in 1 Tim. vi. 7, is verbally different.

j "For one drop of water."—The word rendered *drop* is ܙܘܥܬܐ which is rendered by Castell, *digitus auricularis vel minimus*, the little finger. It is found several times in the *Peschito*, but not in Luke xvi. The literal translation of this passage is, therefore, *a little finger of water; i.e.*, as much as it could take up.

k "Onwards."—Sy., ܠܥܠ *yonder, beyond.* See note *π*, p. 130.

l "Merchandize."—This sense of ܐܣܝܪ we can nowhere find, but it is rendered *commeatus* by Castell, which conveys the idea.

m "Who yet were virgins."—We have supplied the word *yet* to convey clearly the contrast Ephraem makes between the virgins, and the sinner who is speaking. He evidently attaches an

idea of some moral superiority to those called virgins; and Benedict, *more suo*, allows the thought to lose nothing in the translation, "*atque si hic illis non patuit, quibus aderat* virginitatis honor."

n "An alms."—We have not before met, in Ephraem, with ܙܕܩܐ in the singular, in this sense; but the ribbui, which is the only mark of the plural, might easily be omitted.

o "Now."—The meaning of ܗܫܐ as given in the Lexicons, is *hinc*, *illinc*, which will not suit this passage. Benedict renders it *dum vacat*, while there is time.

p "Rather than,"—Sy., *before*.

q "The practitioner is unjust who withholds."—There is some obscurity in this passage. The connection, and the comparison instituted, would seem to require that the *patient* should rather be mentioned here: "While there is balm, and a physician to apply it, the patient acts unjustly to himself by not receiving it," etc. But the word ܚܝܫܐ, here rendered *practitioner*, forbids such a translation. It is from ܚܝܐ *medicatus est*, *sanavit*, and being of frequent occurrence, its meaning is clear. Ephraem uses it in the Fifty-sixth Homily, *Adversus Hæreses*, near the close, where he speaks of the medicine ܒܝܫܬܐ *of those who heal*, spiritually, *i. e.*, of Christian pastors. The passage we are now considering is curious, as it seems to establish a distinction between a physician and an apothecary, as in modern times. When the ܐܣܝܐ has prescribed, the ܚܝܫܐ should not withhold the medicines. Benedict renders the former by *medicus*, the latter by *chirurgus*.

r "The medicine."—Sy., *the roots* ܫܪܫܐ; because, says Michaelis, medicines were so often prepared from herbs. See note *η*, p. 167.

s "O man, thy sins are forgiven thee."—A quotation from the *Peschito* of Luke v. 20. Every letter is the same; and the addition of the word *man*, not found in Matthew and Mark, gives a precision to the passage, as taken from Luke.

t "The crucified king."—Sy., ܡܠܟܐ ܕܨܠܝܒܐ is plain enough,

yet Benedict gives quite a different sense: "*Rex regum crucem in clavem Paradisi mutavit.*"

u "Opens it without stint."—The word ﻓﺘﺢ is used here, which is rather to unloose, *solvere*, but like the Latin word it has an extensive figurative application. Here it refers more to unloosing the lock by the key.

v "He was lost, and hath come again."—This is a reference to Luke xv., rather than a quotation from it, although the principal words are the same as those used in the *Peschito*. *Hath come again* is in Syriac *Hath turned and come.*

w "Snares."—ﺍﻟﺸﺒﻮﻙ is more frequently *stumbling-blocks*, but Castell gives the meaning *laqueus.*

x "Annulled the charge with her tears."—Bernstein gives the meaning *abrogavit* to ﺍﻟﻐﻰ here rendered annulled; *the charge* is in Syriac *the bill*, or *hand-writing*, as in verse 22, Part I.

y "Foreigners."—Sy., *those without.*

z "Thy family."—Sy., *the children of thy house.* The same phrase is rendered *domestics* in verse 93.

a "Thy disposition."—Sy., ﺭﺻﻨﺎ is more commonly *voluntas*, the will, but has here a wider sense. In verse 94 we have rendered it by *character*, as used by us to indicate the general disposition of a man. Benedict renders the former by *pectus*, the latter by *ingenium.*

β "Those at home and abroad."—Sy., *those within and without.*

γ "The long-suffering of his grace."—See 1 Tim. i. 15, 16, from the *Peschito* translation of which all the principal words are taken. The Syriac for long-suffering is ﺑﺴﻨﺎ ﺩﺍﻨﺎ ﻣﻜﻴﻨﺎ *the protracting of the breath*, as is done when forbearance is exercised in a state of angry excitement.

δ "After he fashioned the calf."—See Exodus xxxii. 4.

ε "David, that wise physician."—That is, morally, since he had been a teacher and guide of others by his inspired writings.

ζ "He confessed that he believed."—Sy., *he spake and believed.* The reference is to Psalm cxvi. (cxv. in Syriac) 10, "I believed, therefore have I spoken." Ephraem goes on the supposition that

this Psalm is a description of David's sorrow for his sins, and of the method by which he obtained pardon.

η "Princes and mighty men of war."—The heroes of the Old Testament, whose delinquences are presumed to have been forgiven on their repentance. This proceeds on the very common, though ungrounded assumption, that all whom God raised up to do his will, among the Jews, were morally his friends, unless an exception is expressly stated, as in the case of Saul.

θ "The whole need not a physician."—A literal quotation from Matthew ix. 12.

κ "A physician is made friendly with a fee."—Literally, is propitiated by his *hire* or *reward*, as we have rendered the same word, in verse 149.

λ "Bears away the reward."—Benedict: "*Qui autem sanandus ad te profugit, morbum depulit, mercedem non dedit, sed accepit.*" It is remarkable how frequently Ephraem draws his illustrations from the art of healing, and also how similar are the relations of physicians and their patients, in our day, to those he describes. There were some who practised for gain alone, but there were others who had a high regard for the honour of their profession. See *Nineveh*, Part IV., verses 85, etc.

μ "Doubles its speech."—Sy., *its mouth.*

ν "My burden is very light."—See Matt. xi. 28. Ephraem, while using the same prominent terms as the *Peschito*, gives a paraphrase, rather than a quotation.

Part the Second.

THE SNARES OF SATAN ARE DEPRECATED.—THE VICTORIES OF DAVID REFERRED TO.—HE CONQUERED THE LION AND THE BEAR, BUT WAS OVERCOME BY TEMPTATION.—HIS REPENTANCE AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO OTHERS.—CHRIST IS A SURE PHYSICIAN.—HIS PROMISES ARE QUOTED.—THE SOUL WOULD IMITATE DAVID'S REPENTANCE AND FAITH, THAT IT MAY EMPLOY HIS LANGUAGE OF PRAISE.

LORD, let me not rebel against Thy yoke,
(Oh! how easy is His yoke to all!)
And let not the shoulder of my will
Change Thy burden for another.
Let not the hunter[a] lay for me
The cunning net of his doctrine;
Nor chase me after his pleasure
With sloth and vain desires.
Let not sin come against me as a lion,
And break my designs;
Nor let iniquity, as a lioness,[b]
Rend and trample upon my possessions.[c]

A lion breaks the bones publicly,
But sin does so in secret;
Sin is worse than the lion,
For it destroys both soul and body.
O Lord, David conquered the lion,
And by Thy might slew the bear;[d]
By Thy strength I shall subdue the wicked one,
The hidden bear which lieth in wait for me.
Let him not cast me down as a lion,
Nor let his tooth corrupt my thoughts;
But let him be humbled, as the lion was,
And let Thy servant conquer like David.

But though David overcame the lion,
Sin wounded him on the house-top;[e]
But he hastened, and smote, and overcame[f] it
With the sling of repentance.[g]
He conquered the lion and slew the bear,
Yet in the time of peace a fly[h] subdued him;
But by the word of Nathan he destroyed the sin
Which had burned like a fire within him.[i]
I do not search for the imperfections[j]
Of the fathers through my crimes;[k]
I would relate the superiority[l] of their deeds,
And how much they loved Thee.
But I view the amount of my sins
In the mirror of their imperfections;
And I there seek for pardon
Where they obtained forgiveness.
For what sinner can be able

To reach unto those just ones?
Who, when they did foolishly,
Soon returned to wise courses,[m]
And loved Thee more through their folly.
But I every day am sinning,
And continually[n] repenting;
But my repentance is not constant,[o]
For sin coming makes it of no effect.

What physician is like Thee,
Who does[p] not fail to effect a cure?
Although the former wound should close up,
And another sore should break out,
Yet Thy balsam will by no means fail
To heal at all seasons.
Thy love speaks tenderly[q] to the sick,
"Hesitate not to come to me;"
Thy mercy calls to the sinner,
"O man, receive forgiveness;
Though thou shouldst sin seventy times seven,[r]
In one hour I will forgive thee;
Though thy bill is of five hundred,
Like the harlot's, I will tear it up.[s]
If thou askest it of me, I will remit
Ten thousand talents of sins;[t]
If thou labourest but one hour in the evening,
Yet I will pay thee the penny;[u]
Though thou comest in with the last,
I will receive thee as those who were first.[v]
All the sores[w] which the wicked one

Can inflict upon thee, I will heal;
All the wounds which may chance to thee
From robbers, I will bind up;[x]
Though thy body be altogether[y] dead,
I can make it live again;
Though thy soul should be wholly smitten,
I can restore it to health."

Lord, let me not depart from Thy door,
For lo! Thy mercy stands there;
Neither let me desert Thy house of refuge,
Where loving-kindness makes its home.[z]
Let no sickness light upon me,
Nor sloth, nor insensibility;
Without my obtaining, for these sores of sin,
Healthfulness by repentance.[α]
Let no root[β] be generated within me
Which shall produce the fruits of negligence,
And I be deprived of my wish
Like Esau of his birthright.
Lord, let me not act dishonestly with Thy money,[γ]
Nor let its interest be lost in my hands;
Lest I suffer chastisement from Thy justice,
Like the unprofitable servant.
Let not Thy sentence there blame me
Concerning the money and its increase,
And me be condemned, like a presumptuous man,
On account of both principal and interest.[δ]
May I repay the principal henceforth,
And the interest from this time onward,

And rejoice that my accounts are canceled
By the hands of the creditor.[e]
May I judge my thoughts in future,
And dismiss my corruptions,
And from this time end my maladies.
I would pluck up the roots of my sins,
While there is a physician to receive me,
And a healer not disgusted with my wounds.[ζ]

Since the door of mercy stands open,
And the hospital of Thy grace,
Lord, may I daily behold
All the sores of my wounds,
And break and sprinkle upon them
The healing drug of repentance.[η]
Since the sun of mercy shines abroad,
And the noon-day yet declines not,[θ]
And the night is coming, as Thou hast said,
In which no man can work,[ι]
I will go from the darkness of sins
To the tabernacle of Thy light.

I will return to Thy door
From the by-path[κ] of sin;
Lord, the wicked one hath deceived me, and I have strayed
By sleep, and evil desire, and food.
By these three he has ensnared me, O Lord,
But by these three I shall be delivered from his nets;

By love which excites the slothful,
By hope which justifies sinners,
And by faith in the truth[λ]
Which extends a hand to the repentant.
It hath been heard by me, that Thou despisest not
A heart which is contrite for its sins,
And which throws itself hourly into the conflict[μ]
Of the battle of penitence;
But although Thou despisest not a contrite heart
It is yet broken by its sins
And tormented by its remembrances
In the exercise[ν] of repentance.
Behold, Lord, I am contrite for my crimes;
The whole multitude of my responsibilities[ξ]
Together would make supplication
Until they obtain acquittal;[ο]
And would utter sounds of weeping,
And pour out tears like water;
And our heart would break with sighing
Until there is forgiveness.
Let David stand up and sing for us
His great psalm of supplication,
"Have mercy upon me, O Lord;"[π]
And do Thou answer us according to Thy grace.
Let not Thy kindness fail us
The great door of Thy goodness;
But may we see our bills
Torn down from the lintel.[ρ]
Let us have no creditor,
Other than Thy dominion.[σ]

According to the greatness of Thy mercy turn to us,
And blot out the handwriting of our sins.
In the mirror of repentance
May we see the magnitude of our blemishes;
"Wash me throughly from my iniquity,
And purge me from my sins."
Let our body praise Thee that it is cleansed
From the filth of its origin;[τ]
And our conscience that it is purified
From corrupt imaginations.
Let our soul rejoice that it hath been purged
With Thy hyssop, Lord, from its stains;
And then let it return thanks
With the Psalmist, the son of Jesse.[υ]

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a "The hunter."—That is, Satan, a term often applied to him by Ephraem.

b "Nor let iniquity as a lioness."—Notwithstanding the comparative fewness of words which marks the Syriac and kindred languages, the synonymous terms are often very numerous. Thus, the words rendered sin and iniquity in this and the former verse are ܚܛܝܬܐ and ܥܘܠܐ, both from the same root, the one masculine and the other feminine.

c "My possessions."—Or, *my gains*, ܡܠܘܬܝ. Benedict, "*Opes quas hactenus collegi.*"

d "The bear."—The Syriac ܕܒܐ is *lupus*, or wolf, in Matt. vii. 15, and other places; and Benedict renders it *lupus* in this passage. But the connection shews that it should be *bear*, like the Hebrew, דֹּב. The confusion arises from the similarity be-

tween the Syriac ܕܒܐ and the two Hebrew words דֹּב a *bear*, and זְאֵב a *wolf*.

e "Sin wounded him on the house-top."—A reference to the sad passage in the life of David, recorded in 2 Samuel xi. 2.

f "Overcame it."—This meaning is not given to ܚܠ in the Lexicons. The nearest is *oppugnavit*, found in Castell.

g "With the sling of repentance."—Observe the curious and far-fetched analogies of this passage. David's killing Goliath is an emblem of his slaying the sin by which he had been overcome; and the sling with which he did that renowned deed, is compared with repentance, the instrument with which the spiritual act was accomplished.

h "A fly subdued him."—There is a paranomasia here between the bear, ܕܒܐ *dibo*, which David slew, and the insignificant ܕܒܐ *debo*, fly, which overcame him; the insect pointing to the frivolous nature of the temptation to which he yielded up his character and happiness.

i "Had burned like a fire within him."—Ephraem seems here to glance at the fact that some months elapsed between David's sin, and his repentance, as the result of Nathan's message.

j "Imperfections."—Sy., ܚܣܪܢܐ *short-comings, failings.*

k "Through my crimes."—That is, I do not bring to remembrance the faults of the fathers, to lessen my own sins, but merely to encourage myself in repenting as they did; I would rather expatiate on their virtues, etc.

l "The superiority of their deeds."—The word we have rendered *superiority* is ܡܦܠܓܘܬܐ, literally, *difference;* which however has in it the idea we have conveyed; as the Greek διαφέρω is, *I differ, I surpass, excel.*

m "Soon returned to wise courses."—Sy., *who when they acted foolishly, again did not act foolishly.*

n "Continually repenting."—Sy., *at all seasons*, or *times.*

o "Constant."—Sy., ܩܝܡܢܐ *true, firm, permanent.*

p "Who does not fail to effect a cure."—In English we should

say, Who *dost* not; but this is a very frequent enallage in Syriac, on which some remarks are made in *Hymns and Homilies*, note *b*, p. 57.

q "Thy love speaks tenderly."—The words *speaks tenderly*, we have given for ܡܥܒܕ which is, *uses blandishments*, as in *Nineveh*, Part IV., note *e*.

r "Seventy times seven."—An allusion to Matt. xviii. 22.

s "Like the harlot's I will tear it up."—In Luke vii. 41, it is not said that the *woman which was a sinner* owed five hundred pence, but our Lord merely uses that sum as an illustration of the amount of sin forgiven her, as *fifty* pence designate the sense Simon entertained of the amount of *his* forgiveness from God. This is a good illustration of the literal use of Scripture figures, so common with the early fathers.

t Ten thousand talents of sins."—The Syriac is ܪܘܒܐ *a myriad*, as in the *Peschito* of Matt. xviii. 24. This shews the familiar use made of that version by Ephraem.

u "Yet I will pay thee the penny."—See Matt. xx. 2. The *Peschito* and Ephraem both use ܕܝܢܪܐ. We have introduced the definite article, because the reference here is so special to the text of Scripture.

v "Those who were first."—The terms here used are the same as in Matt. xx. 16.

w "All the sores."—An apparent allusion to the way in which Satan was allowed to afflict Job with bodily maladies.

x "I will bind up."—See the parable of the good Samaritan, Luke x.

y "Altogether dead."—Sy., *all thy body with all.*

z "Where loving-kindness makes its home."—We can find no meaning for ܚܠܐ but *to weave, spin.* Benedict renders it *obtinet.* In the absence of any further authority, we have imagined the idea of *sitting at home* may arise out of the homely and sedentary operation of spinning.

a "Healthfulness by repentance."—The Syriac of this verse has presented to us considerable difficulty. We have rendered

ܕܠܐ ܐܫܟܚ *without my obtaining*, because the sense demands something of the kind, although we cannot clearly get such a meaning from the form. *That I may obtain* is the more obvious translation. Literally, the whole passage runs thus: "Let not meet me sickness and sloth and torpor, *that I may possess*, or *obtain*, in the sores of sin, healthfulness by repentance." Certainly this may convey the sense, that sickness, etc., being absent, the soul might obtain (being thus undisturbed by such afflictions) health by repentance. But we leave the matter, giving the *sense*, though perhaps not the exact construction. Benedict translates: "*Neve mihi incedat languor, desidia, torpor, unde contracto morbo quem culpa generat, pœnitentiæ medicamenta requiram.*"

β "Let no root be generated."—See Heb. xii. 15, 16, where the same word ܫܪܫܐ *root* is used in the *Peschito*. The whole passage is formed on the account of Esau's vain attempt to obtain *his* wish or prayer, after he had lost the birthright, by the negligence of his best interests, in a time of mere physical necessity.

γ "Let me not act dishonestly with thy money."—See Matt. xxv. 24.

δ "Both principal and interest."—Sy., *horn and increase*, on which see note *s*, p. 69.

ε "By the hands of the creditor."—Literally, "and rejoice that my bills are done away with by the hands of *the master of the debt*." This decides the use of the latter term, which is treated of in note *h*, p. 13, and note *s*, p. 139. For the word rendered *accounts*, or *bills*, see note *i*, p. 13.

ζ "A healer not disgusted with my wounds."—Benedict translates this, "*Chirurgus ulceratos et tabidos non fastidiens*,"—a surgeon not nice about ulcerated and putrefying persons; a correct sense from ܐܟܝ *tæduit, fastidivit.*

η "The healing drug of repentance."—Sy., *root*, which being powdered, was used as a dry application to a sloughing wound. Benedict: "*Eisque salutarem pœnitentiæ pulverem inspergam.*" Note *r*, p. 155.

θ "And the noon-day yet declines not."—The Syriac is, ܘܠܐ ܐܙܠ ܛܥܡ ܒܨܦܪ; but, unable to find any meaning

to the word ܕܪܡܐ we have presumed it is an error for ܕܪܡܐ *oriens*, the dawn or sun-rising. *The head of the sun-rising* will be the zenith, where the upward apparent motion of the sun ceases, and it begins to *decline* to the west. Benedict: "*Dum misericordiæ dies nobis constat.*"

ι "In which no man can work."—A quotation from the *Peschito* of John ix. 4.

κ "The by-path of sin."—Sy., ܫܒܝܠܐ so used in *Hymns and Homilies*, note *f*, p. 154.

λ "And by faith in the truth."—Benedict, "*Fide, quæ ad bonam frugem redeuntes, propositâ veritate, velut porrectâ manu sustinet labantes.*"

μ "And which throws itself hourly into the conflict."—The Syriac word for conflict is ܡܓܐ, the Greek *ἀγὼν*.

ν "The exercise."—Sy., ܐܣܩܝܛܐ, not found in Castell; and in Bernstein it has only the meaning, with a final ܛ, of *Scete*, a celebrated desert in Egypt, the resort of monks. This word is the Greek *ἄσκησις*, *exercise*, from which the desert derived its name, the word being technically confined in its application to religious and *ascetic* occupations.

ξ "My responsibilities."—Sy., *my reckonings, computations.*

ο "Until they obtain acquittal."—Sy., until they obtain the hand-writings, or bills.

π "Have mercy upon me, O Lord."—The 51st Psalm is here called *the great one*, in relation to supplication; and in every age, since it was written, it has been the great exemplar of true penitential language.

ρ "Torn down from the lintel."—ܫܘܙܒܐ is first *door*, then *limen, threshold*, or *lintel.*

σ "Other than thy dominion."—There is a paranomasia here which may be thus expressed in English: "Let there be no lord of a debt to us, other than Thy lordship."

τ "From the filth of its origin."—The word we have rendered *origin* is ܡܥܝܢܐ which is a *fountain, spring*, the origin of a

stream of water; and is applied here to the source of human sinfulness and corruption.

v "With the Psalmist the son of Jesse."—The reader will observe, that there is a constant allusion from verse 146, to the 51st Psalm, ending with an expression of hope that the joyful aspirations which David uttered, might be adopted in this case.

Part the Third.

GOD'S MERCY IS TO BE GREATLY MAGNIFIED.—THE WORDS OF CHRIST, LIKE THOSE OF A PHYSICIAN, COMFORT THE PENITENT.—REPENTANCE SHOULD LEAD TO STEDFAST REFORMATION.—THE CHRISTIAN SHOULD LABOUR FOR AN INCORRUPTIBLE CROWN, AS MEN DO FOR ONE WHICH IS CORRUPTIBLE.

We will greatly extol Thy grace
Which rejoices so much in the penitent;
We will praise and adore Thy love
Which gives such a welcome to sinners.
Let all men run to Thy loving-kindness
So fully extended to the wicked;
And lay hold of the skirts of Thy goodness
As the diseased woman did of Thy mantle.[a]
Let our tongue loudly cry out
Like the publican for his sins,[b]—
"O God, the Son of God,
Be gracious to sinners who call upon Thee!"
Let Thy loving-kindness draw me from the mire,

And Thy doctrine from the midst of snares.
Thou hast brought me up from the pit;
Let us not, Lord, turn again to our sins;
Let not the evil one rejoice at our falling
After we have arisen and prospered;
And let us not be smitten by robbers
After Thou hast healed our wounds.

O Physician, who never failest,
Heal the sores of our sins!
Thou Balm, which binds up and cures,
Heal the distempers of our souls!
The whole hope of the diseased man
Is always placed in the physician;
Yea, the word of the chirurgeon
Gives heart[c] to the patient.
Let Thy word, O Lord, give us confidence,—
That we may pray to Thee on account of our distempers,—
"Turn ye, O repentant children,
And I will heal your backsliding."
Whoever therefore is sickly, let him come,
And he shall be healed from his infirmity;
And let the contrite shew his wound,
And receive balsam for his sore.

Because he gives freely
The rain and the dew to the husbandman,
He should not sleep on that account,
And not sow and plough;[d]

So, because the medicine is at hand
To heal all sinners,
We should not be slothful in asking
For the forgiveness of sins.
For if the husbandman does not sow the seed,
Neither will the rain afford him aid;
And unless the sinner makes supplication,
Grace will not heal him.
It rather says, speaking as a man,
"Shew thy sore, and I will heal it for thee."
He seeks to see thy conversion,
And then He will effect thy cure.
Offer to Him penitence of disposition,
And He will receive thee.
"Turn ye unto me, and I will turn unto you,"
Is the message He hath sent by the prophet.[e]
Turn thy heart to prayer
That His grace may turn to meet thee;
Run thou in the path of repentance
That His goodness may light upon thee.

Be not one day a penitent,
And another day a sinner;
One day a companion of sinners,
And another of the repentant;
Cry not, one day, "Have mercy on me,
For I have erred and strayed and fallen;"
And the next, "I will eat and drink,
For to-morrow I die."[f]
Stray not, lest on a sudden

Thy death[g] as a giant should meet thee;
Lest bodily ease should cause thee to perish,
And thou find not repentance.
Let thy end come, and see thee
In the exercise of penitence;
In the strife after holiness
Let thy appointed death find thee;
In the conflict of faith
Receive the end of thy toil;
With the crown of righteousness
Let the course of thy life be completed.

In the race-course[h] and its shows,[i]
In its wrestlers[j] and its charioteers,[k]
Contemplate the world and its changes,
Its pleasures and its sorrows.
For if, for a crown that fades away,
The wrestler strives and labours,
How should the true[l] *champion* contend
For one that is incorruptible?
"For one who strives for the mastery,"[m]—
As Paul hath written to us,[n]—
"Is temperate in all things,"[o]
Until he attains the crown
In the strife against the wicked one.
How much it behoves us to be pure[p]
Until we obtain the victory,
And escape from his wickedness[q]
In the conflict with his devices!
Because that wicked one makes war

With our humble state, through his envy,
God has given thee a saving balsam
Against the wounds of his arrows,[r]
Even the repentance our Lord preached to thee
By the mouth of the prophet.
That is quite an efficient cure[s]
If thou repentest in truth;
Not like the penitents of that people,
Who, with the stolen things in their hands,
And with defiled bodies,[t]
Cried out with their mouth, "Deliver us!"[u]

Hear the voice which accuses
Those of old time for their defilements;
Do thou also accuse thyself for thy trespasses,
And refrain from the power of thy corruptions.
Approach not with a double heart[v]
To Him who searches all imaginations;
Nor come by two pathways
To Him who understands hidden things.
Thou hast repented; turn not to the mire
From which loving-kindness hath washed thee;
Thou art converted; incur not again the debts
Whose bills have been destroyed.
The man who has escaped from captivity,
By no means desires to revisit it;
Or if he has left the affliction of banishment,[w]
He prays that he may not again incur it.
Do thou, who art delivered from the yoke
Of the murderer,[x] the enemy of men,

Pray that thou become not again entangled
In the meshes of his nets !

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a "Thy mantle."—The reference is to Matt. ix. 20, or the parallel places in the synoptical Gospels. But though the word here used, ܣܦܝܦܐ, is found several times in the *Peschito*, it is not employed in either of those passages.

b "Like the publican for his sins."—Although the reference is plainly to Luke xviii. 10, yet the prayer of the publican, which is there recorded, is not given here. The spirit of his petition is inculcated rather than the form of words he employed.

c "Gives heart to the patient."—Sy., *is heartiness* ܚܣܝܢܘܬܐ, or *confidence*, as the verb is translated in the next verse.

d "And not sow and plough."—Sy., *he should not sleep from sowing and ploughing.*

e "The message He hath sent by the prophet."—The passage nearest to this quotation, seems to be that in 2 Chron. xxx. 6; but that is in the message of king Hezekiah to the people. Benedict, in a marginal note, refers to Ezek. xxxvi. 9; but that contains only one member of the quotation, *I will turn unto you.* Ephraem probably quoted from memory.

f "For to-morrow I die."—Either from Is. xxii. 13, or 1 Cor. xv. 32, though not verbally the same as either passage.

g "Thy death."—Sy., ܣܘܦܐ *end, termination.* Benedict, "*Ne interea dum mors quasi gigas te inopinantem parat opprimere.*"

h "In the race-course."—Sy., ܐܣܛܕܝܘܢ, the Greek στάδιον, *palæstra, locus quo certatur.*

i "Its shows."—Sy., ܬܐܛܪܘܢ. The meaning *spectaculum* is given by Bernstein, but not by Castell.

j "Its wrestlers."—Sy., ܐܬܠܝܛܐ, *athleta.*

k "Its charioteers."—ܐܣܛܪܛܐ is rendered *auriga* by Castell,

without any example. It is plainly the Greek ἡνίοχος, *charioteer.*

l "The true champion."—The Syriac has only ܙܕܝܩܐ *the true one.* The sense seems to be, "If a wrestler, so called by men, strives, how should he who is truly such, etc."

m "One who strives for the mastery."—Literally, *one who works a strife*, or *contention*, as in the strife of two combatants.

n "As Paul hath written to us."—See 1 Cor. ix. 25. The quotation is exactly taken from the *Peschito.*

o "Is temperate in all things."—Sy., *restrains his mind from all.* This quotation from St. Paul has in it two remarkable idioms, which are worthy of notice. The Greek, πᾶς δὲ ὁ ἀγωνιζόμενος, is ܟܠ ܕܡܬܓܗܕ ܓܗܕܐ *whoever makes a strife*, or as the English version renders it, *every man that striveth for the mastery.* The Greek πάντα ἐγκρατεύεται, *is temperate in all things*, is ܟܠ ܒܟܠ ܡܕܡ ܡܬܟܢܫ.

p "How much it behoves us to be pure."—Sy., *to be defecated or purged*, ܢܬܟܪܟ.

q "Escape from his wickedness."—Sy., *wickednesses*, as often in the New Testament.

r "The wounds of his arrows."—Sy., *the arrows of his wounds*, arrows causing wounds.

s "An efficient cure."—The word we have rendered efficient is ܦܥܠ, which is sometimes *fruitful*, *productive.*

t "With defiled bodies."—Sy., *their whoredoms upon their bodies.*

u "Deliver us."—This does not appear to be a quotation, but rather a reference to the Jews, who cried to God for aid, while yet retaining their abominable practices.

v "A double heart."—Sy., *two hearts.*

w "Banishment."—The two words rendered *captivity* and *banishment*, are ܫܒܝܐ and ܓܠܘܬܐ. The former is the state into which a man is brought by a victorious enemy; the latter may only mean a legal or a voluntary exile.

x "The murderer, the enemy of men."—Or, *the hateful murderer of men.* In John ix. 44, the devil is said to be an ἀνθροποκτόνος, *man-slayer*, rendered in the English version *a murderer*. The *Peschito*, quoted here by Ephraem, is an exact rendering of the Greek, with the epithet *hateful* introduced.

Part the Fourth.

THE FREEDOM OF MAN'S WILL TO REPENT OR CONTINUE IN SIN.—GOD'S APPEALS TO THAT EFFECT BY THE PROPHETS.—THERE IS JOY IN HEAVEN OVER PENITENT SINNERS.—GOD HAS ABUNDANTLY DONE HIS PART.—FROM ALL ITS EVILS AND DANGERS THE SOUL FLEES FOR REFUGE TO THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

WHO will bestow on a captive
The gift which is presented to me;
That if he pleases, he may continue in bondage,
Or if he wishes it, he may go free?
Yet God places in thy hands
These two things over which thou hast power,[a]
Either to be wounded with thy consent,
Or to be healed with thy free concurrence.[b]
For the physician is not weary,
Though he heal thee ten thousand times;
So, that if thou art not sparing
To inflict wounds upon thy body,
The physician will attend to thee[c] every hour,
And heal thee when, smitten, thou comest to him.

In the letter which was sent
To the penitent, by the hand of Jeremiah,
He calls loudly to thee by the prophet,—
"Return and I will heal thee, why wilt thou die!"[d]
And, by the prophet, he also swears,—
"In the death of such an one I have no pleasure!"[e]

So far, on such *promises*,
Is the cause of the family of Adam established;[f]
For God hath opened His door,
At all seasons, to him who knocks at it.
Loving-kindness rejoices in him who has returned;
Goodness opens wide its arms;[g]
Grace receives and helps him;
The brooding One[h] brings forgiveness.
"For there is joy in heaven,"—
Saith our Lord in His Gospel,[i]—
"For a sinner when he returns
From his crimes to repentance."
The angels are joyful on high,
And the saints in the midst of their assemblies;
The guardian spirits sing loud Hosannahs,[j]
And the seraphim, with the voice of jubilee.[k]
The terrible cherub of Paradise,[l]
Who guards the way to it,
Welcomes thee, O repentant one,
As the new inheritor of the place.
Yea, Paradise is longing for thee,
As for the thief of thy kindred;
And its wide gate is opened for thee

With the key whose seal is the cross.[m]
The tree of life will satisfy[n] thee,
And extend to thee its living fruits;
The garden of Eden will entwine for thee[o]
The great abundance of its trees;
The tabernacles of light of the righteous
Shall provide for thee on every hand;
The glorious city of the upright,
With its saints, shall await thee;
The whole pavilion shall rejoice in thee,
And the attendants on the feast;[p]
The face of the kingdom is brightened,[q]
And of the multitudes in the midst of it;
The crown of the perfect is waiting for thee;
Be wise, and turn it not away![r]

O repentant man, delay not
Until they have returned to the house of the bridegroom;[s]
Prepare for thee a robe of honour
Since there are appropriate[t] wedding garments;
Take the white raiment of the bridal;
Before the advent is dawning,
Trim for thee the lamp of light;
Before the voice startles thee,
Display the present[u] in thy hand.
Who art thou, O sinner,
That thou sittest careless of thy debt?
As though the creditor were remiss,
And silent, respecting his own.

He shews forbearance to thee;
Shew thou with tears the repentance of thy soul.
His gentleness hath abounded to thee,
Return then principal and interest.[v]

With arguments of every form,
O Lord, Thy goodness calls to us;
With all kinds of promises,
Thy grace is willing we should live.
O Lord, the great net of Thy doctrine[w]
Prevails with all classes of men,—
With publicans and harlots.
The snare[x] is laid in the midst of the kingdom,
For rebels that they may be at peace,
For the lost that they may be found.
He sits looking for thy salvation,
Waiting for thy willingness in His tender mercy.

O Lord, I have escaped from iniquity
Like a bird from the midst of the snare;
In the nest of Thy cross will I make my refuge,
Which the serpent cannot approach.
Behold, O Lord, I have fled from my sins
Like a dove from the meshes[y] of the net;
I will dwell on high in Thy cross,
To which the dragon cannot reach!
I will give thanks to Thy life-giving name,
And to the holy name of the Son,
And to the name of the Spirit of truth;
A threefold engraved signet,[z]

By which the wicked one is put to shame; 100
Yea, even Satan trembles at it,
And his hosts and his ministers
Are affrighted by it afar off!

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a "Over which thou hast power."—Sy., *between thy hands potentially*. The only meaning we can find to ܫܘܠܛܢ is *propriè*, given by Bernstein and Castell without explanation or example. The idea of *power* pervades all the derivations from the root of the word, and justifies our rendering.

b "With thy free concurrence."—The Syriac of these two verses is, literally, "If thou art wounded from thy will, thou mayest be healed from thy liberty." But ܐ is not only *if*, the meaning, *sive*, *either*, is given in Bernstein. The numerous nice shades of meaning of the Syriac particles will form, we trust, a future interesting study for philologists. Benedict thus translates the whole passage: "Utrumque scilicet integrum Tibi Deus manere voluit, adeo ut utrumque sit pariter in Tua potestate situm, et vulnus accipere, et acceptum curare."

c "Attend to thee every hour."—The general meaning of ܡܨܦ, the participle of which we have translated *attend to*, is *to look at*, *look after*, *regard*, *provide for*. It occurs again in verse 86, and is there translated, *looking for*.

d "Why wilt thou die?"—A reference to Jer. xxvii. 13, as far as the last part of this verse is concerned. The question, Why will ye die? is as exactly defined in the Hebrew text as in the English version, but the *Peschito* has merely *do not die*. The same may be said of the parallel passage in Ezek. xviii. 31. It would appear from this, and other instances we have noticed, that Ephraem had not always the *Peschito* in use.

e "In the death of such an one I have no pleasure."—A quotation, differently worded, from Ezek. xviii. 32.

f "Is the cause of the family of Adam established."—We have translated ܐܬܬܩܢ *established*, because the sense requires it. The ordinary meaning of the word is *appointed, determined, decreed;* Benedict gives the sense without being literal: "*quâm solidis spes nostra nitatur fundamentis.*"

g "Goodness opens wide its arms."—Sy., *Goodness, its hands are expanded.*

h "The brooding One."—The Syriac is ܐܬܪܚܡ, which, according to Castell, is, *affectus vehemens, amor impensus.* Certainly it might be rendered here, *tender love*, as in Philip. ii. 1, it is used for the Greek σπλάγχνα. But as Benedict translates the word *Spiritus sanctus*, and it is from the root ܪܚܡ, *to brood over*, the same as the Hebrew word used of the Spirit in Gen. i. 2, we feel justified in our version.

"Saith our Lord in His Gospel."—A free reference to Luke xv. 7.

j "The guardian spirits sing loud Hosannahs."—Sy., *the watchers* ܥܝܪ̈ܐ, *cry out with Hosannahs.* See *Hymns and Homilies*, p. 82, note *c.*

k "The seraphim with the voice of jubilee."—Sy., ܩܠܐ, *clangor tubæ, jubilatio*, Castell.

l "The terrible cherub of paradise."—Because a cherub is said to have guarded the gate of Eden, Ephraem presumes the same sentinel is placed at the entrance of heaven. The same idea is found in *Hymns and Homilies*, in the Hymn on the Resurrection, p. 31, strophe 5: "the guarding cherub shall salute them." Also in the Description of Paradise, p. 114, strophe 2:

> "The cherub that walks around it
> Is gentle to those within,
> But threatening to those without."

m "The key whose seal is the cross."—Sy., *the key, its chasing of the cross.*

n "The tree of life will satisfy thee."—The printed Syriac is here indistinct. We read it ܢܨܒ, *to satisfy, inebriate;* but Benedict took it for ܢܨܚ, *to rejoice, exult in*, and translates, "*arbor vitæ tuâ gestiet præsentiâ.*

o "Will entwine for thee."—Sy., ܠܡܣܒܠ, *cause to bend.* Benedict gives a very pretty, and perhaps correct turn to the words: "*Regio illa deliciarum, nemorum suorum coronam ad tua commoda usumque præparavit.*"

p "The attendants on the feast."—The Syriac ܒܝܬ ܡܫܬܐ is rendered by Castell, *sponsor, sodalis, invitator nuptiarum.* Ferrarius gives only *sponsor*, and these are the only references in the Syriac Lexicons. Benedict, "*cœlestes triclinii convivas.*" It may probably mean *guests.*

q "The face of the kingdom is brightened."—Sy., *the kingdom—its faces are brightened.*

r "Be wise and turn it not away."—Sy., *wise one, do not thou reject.*

s "Returned to the house of the bridegroom."—See Matt. xxv. On the words, *went forth to meet the bridegroom*, Dr. Kitto remarks, "The case is that of a bridegroom, whose bride lives at some distance, and who goes to her residence to celebrate the marriage and take his wife home. The existing customs of the Jews are in favour of this interpretation." *(Pictorial Bible.)*

t "Appropriate wedding garments."—Sy., *since there are the garments of the wedding*, the force of which we have conveyed by the word *appropriate.*

u "The present in thy hand."—Sy., ܠܫܘܕܝ, which Castell, after a Syrian Liturgy, says is *strena nuptialis*, a nuptial present, though *strena* is properly a new-year's gift.

v "Principal and interest."—See p. 69, note *s*.

w "The great net of Thy doctrine."—See p. 151, verse 103.

x "The snare."—That is, as the connection seems to shew, a bait or line laid for fishing purposes.

y The meshes of the net."—ܫܒܟܐ is rendered *laqueus*, *rete*, by Castell, but here it must be a part of the net.

z "A threefold engraved signet."—Benedict: "*signaculum et characterem trinum.*"

End of the Exhortation to Repentance.

A Prayer of the Penitent,

FOR DEFENCE AGAINST SATAN.

(PARÆNETICA VIII., tom. vi., p. 420.)

THE cunning enemy distracts me:
Come to my aid, O Lord of the conquerors;
I have become guilty, O help my guiltiness!

He is wakeful daily, and ready for the combat;
He sleeps not, while I am dreaming;
By Thee, O watchful One, may I overcome his audacity!

I am occupied in supplication,
When he disturbs me with restless imaginations;
O Thou tranquil One! compose me for Thy contemplation!

To Thee be glory, O Father in heaven,
And thanksgiving to the Son of Thy bosom,
And praise to the Holy Ghost!

O soul, whom Satan hath made captive,
Why wanderest thou among the crowd of evil things?
Cry out in trouble, and make thy prayer to be heard!

Alas! the time of death approaches,
And like the winter season I am unfruitful;
By Thy mercy make me live and I will praise Thee!

The season comes when my life will utterly disappear,
And my sins will precede me to the judgment-seat;
In Thy pity be gracious to my frailty!

For my offences Thou didst abide in the virgin's
womb,
And my sins caused Thee to ascend the cross;
In Thy grace pardon my short-comings!

For my sake, Lord, Thou wast smitten,
And in Thy good-will to me Thou wast bound in the
tomb;
Be pleased with me, Lord, and deliver me from judg-
ment!

The goods Thou gavest me I have not preserved,
I have chosen evil things through my wilfulness;
Thou Hope of the penitent, cast me not away!

Thy right hand was transfixed with the nails,
Instead of that I extended to the fruit;
Through Thy body spare me who have sinned!

I have abhorred my life and tormented my members;
Upon my face there is a veil of darkness;
Raise me up that I may see Thee and be comforted!

No repentance will warrant me to draw near,
I confide in Thy pity, and present my prayer;
Reject me not, Thou Hope of the penitent!

The above is a good specimen of the octosyllabic metre, in strophes of three verses, the last of each of which appears to have been a chorus.

An Evening Prayer.

(Parænetica XLV., tom. vi., p. 505.)

O Lord, with Thy pitying eye,
Behold Thy servants who stand in Thy presence,
And minister to thy Godhead;
In Thy grace receive the incense offered to Thee,
Like the censers of Aaron and Eleazar
Which were grateful to Thee;
And be propitious to Thy flock,
And protect it from dangers!

O Lord, in trespasses and sins
I have consumed all the day,
Making thee angry with my actions;
But I present earnest prayer to Thee
In the time of evening, that Thou wilt forgive me;
Forgive all my folly,
Save me, and have mercy on me!

O Lord, may I remember the day of my death,
And feel remorse; and let trembling seize me
For the evils which have been done by me;
For I know that I am about to be judged,
By a great Judge, in Thy presence;

Forgive me all my folly,
Save me, and have mercy on me!

O Lord, vouchsafe to me Thy tender mercy,
And deal not after my corruptions,
Nor according to the great evils of my heart;
But in Thy goodness enlighten the eye of my mind,
That I may rejoice in the forgiveness of my folly;
Forgive me all my folly,
Save me, and have mercy on me!

O Lord, with heavy moanings
And weeping, David thus spake,—
"O God, have mercy on me
According to Thy loving-kindness,
And forgive my trespasses;"
Thou Lord of tender pity,
Be gracious, and have mercy on me!

O Lord, through all my days
I have sinned in Thy sight, and angered Thee,
And have not turned to repentance;
And now I am brought to the evening,
The end of the seasons of the short life of man;
O turn me in Thy grace,
Save me, and have mercy on me!

O Lord, receive the prayer,
And the supplication, which at the eleventh hour,
Like the thief, I present to Thee;

And in Thy favour receive my spirit in peace,
Which I commit to the hands of Thy mercy;
Forgive me all my folly,
Save me, and have mercy on me!

O Lord, if Thou camest to save sinners,
I am the chief of them;
O magnify Thy mercy,
Be gracious to my low estate,
And draw me from the sea of my crimes;
Forgive me all my folly,
Save me, and have mercy on me!

O Lord, I have thought upon my end,
And trembling and remorse have seized me
Lest I should be condemned for my wickedness;
If the angels are moved with fear
And the ranks of spirits tremble,
I should earnestly pray to Thee,
Save me, and have mercy on me!

O Lord, I ask one thing of Thee,
And for two, withhold not Thy goodness;
Save me here in Thy grace
From Satan, and from evil men;
And in the day of the appearing of Thy advent
Vouchsafe the forgiveness of my trespasses;
And here and there I will thank Thee for these two things,
O Christ, the lover of the penitent!

O Lord, when Thy loving-kindness came down,
That here it might be clothed with humanity,
The angel Gabriel flew
On wings of light from on high,
And brought a salutation to Mary;
He answered and said to her, "Peace be to thee,
O Mary, the Lord is with thee;
From thee shall spring forth
The salvation of all creatures."

O Lord, behold the holy martyrs pray with us
By the blood which their enemies shed;
The altars which are destroyed pray with us,
And the churches which are devastated,
Which the children of Hagar have laid waste;
They have trodden down Thy sanctuaries
And scattered the bones of the saints.
Lord, defer not to aid Thy worshippers,
And let their memorial be for ever!

O Lord, grant rest in Thy goodness
To the faithful departed ones,
Who died hoping in Thee;
And count them worthy, at Thy coming,
To stand at Thy right hand,
And let them enter Thy pavilion with Thy saints.
O Lover of mankind,
Have mercy upon us and them!

While the structure of this Hymn is very artificial, it presents

many apparent irregularities. The latter strophes especially exceed the others in the number of their verses, and are destitute of the well-defined chorus. We are disposed to think that two different pieces have been united together, although it is certainly possible that what appear to be anomalies, may be adaptations to peculiarities in the worship of the Syriac church. Perhaps the first strophe was sung by the whole choir; the next eight antiphonally, with a chorus; and the remaining four by the whole choir again. Allusion seems to be made to some irruption of Arabs, whose devastations were recent.

Renunciation of the World.

A DESCRIPTION OF ITS VANITIES.

(PARÆNETICA XLIX., tom. vi., p. 512.)

ALAS for thee, O world!
How much art thou loved;
Thy beauties are many,
But they are not permanent;
For thou art but a dream
Without real existence!—
I renounce thee henceforth,
O wicked world!

Through the fair things within thee,
And thy pleasures,
And thy magnificence,
O world! I have admired thee;
But how transient are they,
And like things that are not!—
I renounce thee henceforth,
O wicked world!

The ornaments which are on thee
Are splendid and desirable,

And thy garments also
Are very beautiful;
But like a declining shadow
They pass away;—
I renounce thee henceforth,
O wicked world!

I am agitated with fear
On thy account, O world!
For if I love thee
I then become guilty;
And if I cast thee off
I have cause for trembling;—
I renounce thee henceforth,
O wicked world!

Behold, all who enter into thee
To trade with thy wares,
Carry away with them
A burden of crimes;
Thy riches are but vanity,
As are also thy days;—
I renounce thee henceforth,
O wicked world!

Woe be to whosoever
Shall love thee, O world!
For he will be caught in thy snares,
And in the nets thou layest for him.
He shall lose his soul

And yet not possess thee;—
I renounce thee henceforth
O wicked world!

The warriors who were in thee,
And the mighty men of renown;
The proud nobility,
And those who ruled others;
Where are they, where are they?
Come and shew them to me;—
I renounce thee henceforth,
O wicked world!

Thou hast corrupted the beauty
Of honourable women,
And hast taken away from them
The children they have brought forth;
Thou hast destroyed the habitations
Of those who possessed them;—
I renounce thee henceforth,
O wicked world!

Thou hast caused wise men to err
By means of thy treasures;
And led away captive the free
By thy crafty wiles;
And made the simple thy prey
By thy deceitful cunning;—
I renounce thee henceforth,
O wicked world!

Thou art a mighty sea,
Agitated and tossed about
By the winds and the waves
Which tumultuously move thee;
He who tempts thy waters,
Will sink within thee;—
I renounce thee henceforth,
O wicked world!

The collected treasures
And good things which are in thee,
Yea, thy splendours
And thy delicacies,
Disappear and pass away
As though they had never been;—
I renounce thee henceforth,
O wicked world!

The gaudy trappings
Of haughty monarchs,
And the precious diadems
Appertaining to empires,
Fade away within thee
As though they never existed;—
I renounce thee henceforth,
O wicked world!

A fountain that gusheth forth
With all that is wicked,
Art thou, O world!

To those who are immersed in thee;
Evil indeed are the wages
Thou returnest to all;—
I renounce thee henceforth,
O wicked world!

Thy aspect is a hateful one
To all who have understanding;
Polluting is thy acquaintance,
And deceitful thy love;
Happy is that man
Whom thou hast not defiled;—
I renounce thee henceforth,
O wicked world!

Youths and full-grown men,
Boys and those of grey hairs,
Thou dost alike bewitch
With thy pleasing allurements;
And then, as with fetters,
Thou dost deprive them of liberty;—
I renounce thee henceforth,
O wicked world!

To whosoever loves thee,
Thou givest as an inheritance
A pit which is filled
With torment and tears;
But he who hates thee,
Inherits salvation;—

I renounce thee henceforth,
O wicked world!

Those who inhabit thee
Are deprived of their possessions;
Thou pullest them down
On those who were their masters;
And thou makest unfruitful
Those who should be mothers;—
I renounce thee henceforth,
O wicked world!

Read in the Scriptures,
And learn there, my brethren,
That the world passes away
And becomes as nothing;
Let us then make provision
For that which is permanent;—
I renounce thee henceforth,
O transitory world!

Omnipotent and merciful
Is God towards those
Who reject this world,
Which is passing away,
And meditate continually
Upon that which remaineth;—
I renounce thee henceforth,
O transitory world!

Glory be to the Good,
To whom appertain
Both these worlds,
And all that is in them;
Both that which passeth away
And that which remaineth;—
I renounce thee henceforth,
O transitory world!

Come, my beloved brethren,
Let us gain our own souls;
Let us reform ourselves
In this transitory world;
That we may inherit life
In that which is immoveable;—
I renounce thee henceforth,
O transitory world!

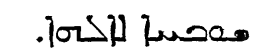
Come, let us exercise repentance
In this world which abideth not;
And, acting like wise men,
We shall gain our souls;
For the other world
Belongs to God;—
I renounce thee henceforth,
O transitory world!

Let us become, in our vigils,
Diligent watchers;
And present continually

Our holy prayers;
That with those virgins,
Who displayed wisdom,
We may meet the Bridegroom
In the day of His appearing.

Come, let us be diligent,
My brethren, in our fasting,
And in our supplications,
And in pure affection;
That with those who were abstinent,
And the pious blessed,
We may enter and sit down
At the table of the happy.

This piece is tetrasyllabic, and very perfect in its construction.



INDEX I.

OF SYRIAC WORDS ILLUSTRATED.

ܐܓܘܢܐ conflict, strife, *ἀγὼν*, 168.

ܐܬܘܢܐ oven, 127.

ܐܝܟ ܕ as though, lest, 70.

ܐܝܟܢܐ and ܐܝܟܢܝܬ how distinguished, 80.

ܐܠ to restrain, repress, 25.

ܐܠ either, 182.

ܐܢܩܐ oppressions, 14.

ܐܣܘܛܐ dissipated, *ἄσωτος*, 114.

ܐܣܬܐ merchandize, 154.

ܐܣܟܝܣܐ exercise, *ἄσκησις*, 168.

ܐܦܣܐ a bill, account of a debt, 13.

ܐܙܠ to be present, 115.

ܐܪܙܘܢܐ a gift, 138.

ܐܬܝܪ fierce, sharp, *as a sword*, 67.

ܐܬܠ temples? 127.

ܒܙܪ to diffuse, spread abroad, 131.

ܓܪܝ a satyr, 128.

ܓܙܙ to be agitated, 35.

ܩܒܠ to grasp *the dust*, 84.

ܕܒܐ a bear, 164.

ܥܩ to impede, hinder, 66.

ܕܡܘܬܐ form, appearance, 14.

ܬܠ to doubt, hesitate, 35.

ܕܝܢܐ an ornament, 104.

ܐܝܢܝܘܟܐ a charioteer, ἡνίοχος, 175.

ܩܫ to be severe, 15.

ܩܫܝܐ severe, stern, 103.

ܙܢܐ a zone, girdle, 104.

ܐܒܪܢܐ a ventriloquist, 126.

ܟܬܐ a compact mass, 128.

ܚܕ the indefinite article, 13.

ܒܙ to despise, 47; to attend to, 182.

ܒܙܐ grey hairs, 23.

ܒܙܐ a spectacle, 175; fair, *pulcher*, 83.

ܒܟܪܐ wine, 53.

ܒܥܠܘܬܐ idolatry, 80, 112.

ܒܪܝܩܐ a drop, 154.

ܒܪܝܫܐ searching, *as medicine*, 15.

ܒܫܠ to entice, 47.

ܒܬܝܢܐ peril, danger, 54.

ܒܛܠ to close a wound, 112.

ܚܫܝܠ efficient, 176.

ܨܠܡ statue? 125.

ܟܘܟܒܐ a star, 129.

ܡܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ a trade, 138.
ܒܝܬܐ a temple? 127.
ܒܥܝܬ possessed *with a devil*, 80.
ܗܠܝܢ yonder, *demonstrative*, 130, 154.
ܓܪ componere *jurgia*, 67.
ܓܪܐ to speak, 96.
ܕܒܪܐ *as distinguished from* ܡܠܬܐ, 4, 53, 69.
ܕܝܣܦܣܝܬܘܢ disposition, 68.
ܕܚܠ to hesitate, 42.
ܕܝܢ to be profitable, 94.
ܗܫܐ now, 155.
ܚܬܝܢ betrothed, *masculine*, 84.
ܟܠ ܗܘ the whole, 13.
ܟܒܫ to resist, 128.
ܟܪܝܐ ܕܡܐ a creditor, 13, 139.
ܟܡܢܐ potentially, 182.
ܟܬܝܒ one offended, 139.
ܠܚܠ to fear, 112.
ܠܚܐ one living in celibacy? 24.
ܠܛܛ to annul, abrogate, 156.
ܠܝܩ to be proper to any one, 69.
ܠܨܨ to strike *the head on the ground*, 126.
ܡܨܥ to ascend *a hill*, 124.
ܡܢܐ to number, reckon, 114.
ܡܥܠ to enter *a ship*, 114.
ܡܦܠܝܢܐ an intercessor, 96.

ܒܥܠ ܕܒܐ a creditor, 14.
ܒܙ to corrupt, 113.
ܒܙܙ to break open *a wound*, 112.
ܒܛ to remain at home, 166.
ܒܪܒܪܝ gentile, heathen, *adj.*, 5.
ܒܪܟ to close the eyes, 84.
ܒܪܬܐ root, medicine, 155.
ܒܫ to accuse falsely, 67.
ܓܘܢܙܐ a shroud, 84.
ܓܘܙܐ superiority, 165.
ܓܙ to depart, go away, 112.
ܓܝܡܐ established, 183.
ܓܢܬܐ a blossom, a flower, 97.
ܓܪܬܐ an image, 125.
ܓܪܓ to fare luxuriously, 83.
ܓܫ to disclose, 26.
ܕܒܪܐ disposition, character, 156.
ܕܒܫܐ truly, 142.
ܕܒܪܝ a patron, 138.
ܕܒܪܬܐ chamber, 51.
ܕܒܠ to twist, twine, 80.
ܕܒܬ a gourd, 79, 103.
ܕܓܐ principal, accumulation, 69, 167.
ܕܓܓ a chariot, 104.
ܕܘ death, 175.
ܕܝܥ to be acquainted with, 37.

ܫܘܬܦܐ diligence, 71.
ܪܘܚܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ a name of the Holy Spirit, 183.
ܫܥ ܕܪܫ the zenith, 167.
ܦܬܚܐ a breaking forth, 37.
ܦܠܚ to flatter, move by blandishments, 47, 166.
ܫܘܒܚܐ rendered indulgence by Asseman, *Introd.*, xxi.
ܦܪܨܘܦܐ a private person, 112.
ܦܬܚ to open, 156.
ܦܓܪܐ a skeleton, 94.
ܦܩܥܐ a gourd, 79, 103.
ܦܣܩ to practise, 51.
ܫܒܝܠܐ a by-path, 168.
ܬܒܬܐ a change of mind, 102.
ܫܒܩ a clasp, 104.
ܫܒܣܐ a mantle, 54.
ܬܫܡܫܬܐ education, 131.
ܫܒܩ to flow freely, 83.
ܫܟܡܬܐ a lintel, 168.

ERRATUM.

Page 24, last line but one, for ʾ read ʿ

INDEX II.

OF TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE ILLUSTRATED.

	Chap.	Verse.	Page.
Gen.	v.	32.	39
	vi.	4.	13
	vii.	4.	38
	x.	8, 10.	67
	x.	11.	36
	xxii.	5, 7.	26
	xxvii.	16.	66
	xli.	42.	104
Exod.	ii.	16.	80
	xxxii.	4.	156
Deut.	xxxii.	16.	81
		17.	82
		33.	68
Judges	xvii. xviii.		130
1 Sam.	xvii.	2.	80
2 Sam.	xi.	2.	165
1 Kings	i.	40.	105
	vi.	33.	47
	xii.	29.	126
	xvii.	9.	80
2 Kings	xiv.	25.	82
	xv.	19.	64
	xvii.	16.	81
1 Chron.	v.	26.	64
Job	xix.	22.	53
Psalms	xvi.	11.	85
	xxvii.	2.	53
	xlix.	17.	154
	li.		168
	cvi.	37.	82
	cxvi.	10.	156
Prov.	xiii.	32.	68
Isaiah	xiii.	8.	25
		21.	129
	xxi.	3.	25
	xxii.	12.	24
	xxiv.	2.	14
	xlvii.	2.	23
	li.	17.	13
Jer.	vii.	11.	81
	xxvii.	13.	182
Ezek.	viii.	14.	81
Ezek.	xviii.	31, 32.	182
Hosea	xii.	11.	81
Amos	v.	26.	130
Jonah	*passim.*		
Nahum	ii.	8.	5
Hab.	ii.	11.	35
2 Macc.	iv.	10.	80
Matt.	v.	30.	35
	vi.	1.	14
	vii.	7.	154
	ix.	12.	157
	xi.	28.	157
	xiv.	6.	50
	xvi.	26.	14
	xviii.	22.	166
	xx.	2, 16.	166
	xxi.	13.	81
	xxv.	1.	184
Luke	iii.	14.	67
	iv.	18.	71
	v.	20.	155
	vii.	41.	166
	xv.		156
		7.	183
	xviii.	1.	15
		10.	175
John	ix.	4.	168
		44.	177
Acts	ii.	37.	35
Romans	ii.	20.	14
	iii.	4.	103
	xii. xiii.		71
1 Cor.	ix.	25.	176
Gal.	iii.	1.	36
	v.	7.	66
Col.	ii.	14.	13
1 Tim.	i.	15, 16.	156
2 Tim.	iv.	3.	47
Heb.	iv.	12.	15
	xii.	15, 16.	167
1 Pet.	i.	12.	80
	iii.	20.	38

III.

INDEX OF SUBJECTS.

ABULLABASUS, his letter on the Fast of the Ninevites, xxxii.
ABRAHAM'S offering of Isaac, observations on, 19.
ACCUSE to, accusation, calumny, Syriac expressions for, 52.
ASMODEUS or Asmodai, the prince of the demons, 129.
ASSHUR or Athoor, the name given to Mosul and Nineveh, 36.
ASSEMAN, mode of spelling the name, xix.; his infidelity as a translator, xx.
AUGUSTINE'S opinion of the Hebrew text of Jonah, xxiv.

BAPTISM only to be once administered, xx.; mode of in the time of Ephraem, xlviii.; the idea of immersion associated with it, xlviii.
BADGER, Rev. G. P., his Nestorians and their Liturgies quoted, xxxi., xxxv.
BARDESANES taught heresy in metres, xxvii.; borrowed his metres from the Greeks, lvii.
BERNSTEIN, his edition of the Syriac Gospel of St. John, lix.
BLACKBURN, Rev. J., his *Rise and Fall of Nineveh* quoted, 48, 82.
BRIDEGROOM the, his return from the wedding, 184,
BROWNE, Sir T., quoted, 129.

CHALDÆA, a term used for Astrology, 50; Chaldæan, an Astrologer, 50.
CHERUB guards the gate of paradise and of heaven, 183.
CHRIST the great Physician, 171,
CHRONICLES of Cartaphilus, quoted, 65.
CODEX Syriaco-Hexaplaris, lix.
CYCLOPÆDIA of Biblical Literature quoted, 53.

DEMONS, sacrifices to, 82; Satyrs so called, 128.
DAVID, his sin and repentance, 151, 159.
DEBTOR and creditor, the misery of described, 127.
DE DIEU, on Matthew xiv. 6, 50.
DELUGE described, 33; Patience of God previous to, 38.
DEVIL represented as black, 129.
DRAKE, Rev. W., his *Notes on Jonah*, xxxvii.

EARTHQUAKE attended the preaching of Jonah, 24, 93.
ELIAS Damascenus, his account of the fast of the Ninevites, xxxii.
EPHRAEM, his works adapted for popular effect, xii; the metrical form of his writing should be recognized in translations, xiv.; his commentary on Jonah noticed by Asseman, but not

printed in his works, xxii.; his ignorance of Greek, xxiv., xlii.; his sermons metrical, xxviii.; his early dream, xxvii.; his habitual devotion, xlii.; his personal appearance, xliv.; his pupils, xlvi.; literary estimate of his *Repentance of Nineveh*, &c., lii.; he exalts Old Testament characters, 48; his fanciful exposition of the history of Jacob, 66; attributes falsehood to Jonah, 111; remarks on his so doing, 115; remarks on his system of ethics, 66.

ETHERIDGE, Rev. J. W., his *Syrian Churches*, noticed, xxxi., lix.

EXHORTATION to Repentance, an, 145.

"FAST of the Ninevites" observed by the Syrian Churches, xxxi.; origin of it, xxxi.; traditions respecting it, xxxiii.

FATHERS, the early Christian, not generally adapted for popular reading, xii.

FASTING, how discovered by the Ninevites, 59; extended to the beasts of the field, 60; remarks on the fasting of the brute creatures, 70

FISH that swallowed Jonah, 5.

FORBEARANCE of God before the Deluge, 38; translation of 1 Pet. iii. 20, by the *Peschito*, 38.

FORGIVENESS, translated *indulgence* by Asseman, xxi.

FREE-WILL, Ephraem's opinion on, 182.

GENESIS, commentary of Ephraem on, 38.

GIFTS called blessings, why, 138.

GOSPEL revelation, historical development of, xvi.

GOURD, what, 79; lessons taught by it, 103.

GREEK tragedians, their aphorisms, 113.

HEBREW TEXT, defect of Ephraem's copy of, xxiii.

HOFFMAN'S, Mr., *Chronicles of Cartaphilus*, quoted, 54.

HOROSCOPE, a, the Syriac expression for, 50.

INDEFINITE article, example of, in Syriac, 13.

INSPIRATION of Jonah, Ephraem's view of, 91; remarks on, 95.

ISRAELITES, great wickedness of, 120.

JACOB'S deception, curious use of, 66.

JEROBOAM, 11, referred to, 81.

JOB, his temptations by Satan, 45.

JONAH, Commentary on, xxii.; tomb of, at Mosul, xxxv.; honours paid to him, xxxv.; effects of his preaching at Nineveh, 7; his fidelity, 43; his vexation at the non-fulfilment of his prediction, 88; he is reconciled by divine teaching, 98; greatly honoured by the people, 100, 102; falsehood attributed to him by Ephraem, 111; he is defended from the charge, 115; tradition of his retirement to Tyre, xxii.; place of burial, xxxvii.; remarks of a Puritan divine on, 79.

KING of Nineveh, who at the time of Jonah, 64.

KITTO, Dr., his *Daily Bible Illustrations*, quoted, 70, 71.

LAZARUS and the rich man, 148.

LENT, origin of the fast of, 52.

LORD, forms in Syriac for, 153.

MANUSCRIPTS, great antiquity of Syriac, xxxix.

MARCIONISTS referred to, xx.

METRES, Syriac, observations on, lvi.; specimen of, 140.

MICAH, his four-fold God, what, 130.

NEANDER on Lent, quoted, 52.
NEBI-YOONAS, Jonah's tomb at, xxxv.; probable antique treasures beneath, xxxvii.
NIMROD, remarks on his name and character, 67.
NINEVEH, called a stagnant pool, 5; king of, who, 64; extent of the city, 53; its grand appearance to Jonah, 48.
NINEVITES, the question whether they fasted three or forty days considered, xxiii.

PESCHITO, Ephraem's use of, xli., *et passim.*
PHYSICIAN, the profession of, 57, 155; Christ the, 171.
PRAYER of the Penitent, 185.
PRAYER, an evening, 188.
PUL, the king of Assyria, 64.

RENUNCIATION of the world, 193.
REPENTANCE OF NINEVEH, origin and intention of the homily, xxvi.; literary characteristics of, xlix.; Latin translation of, by Vossius, xxv.; occasion of its composition, xxxviii.; epic completeness of, liv.; probable effects of its delivery, xlvii.; metre of, lvi.; repentance of the Ninevites, celebrated in the Syriac Churches, xxi.

SABBATH, observed by the Ninevites, 68.
SAMMAEL and Semolo, the prince of the demons, 128, 129.
SARDANAPALUS, remarks on, 65.
SATAN, a hunter, 164; a murderer, 177; he overthrows the house of the sons of Job, 46.
SATURN, worship of, 133.
SATYRS the same as demons, 128.
SEPTUAGINT, discrepancy between it and the Hebrew Text in Jonah, xxiii.
SIMON and the sinful woman, homily on, xlviii.
SYRIAC Literature, great stores of, xv.
SYRIAC Philology, much to be done in, xv.
SYRIAC MSS., great antiquity of, xxxix.
SYRIAC metres, lvi.

TAMMÛZ, who was the god so named, 81.
TECHNICAL terms used by Ephraem, 84.
TERTULLIAN on the doctrine of Plato, 50.
THESAURUS Hymnologicus of Daniel, lix.

VENTRILOQUISTS, Ephraem's notice of, 126.
VIRGINS, the wise and foolish, 148; supposed superior sanctity of, 154.
VOSSIUS, his translation of the *Repentance of Nineveh*, xxv.; part of it quoted, 143.

WINE, the poison of dragons, 68.

ZENITH, Syriac term for, 167.
ZINGERLE, his translations of Ephraem, lviii.
ZODIAC, Syriac term for, 130.

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